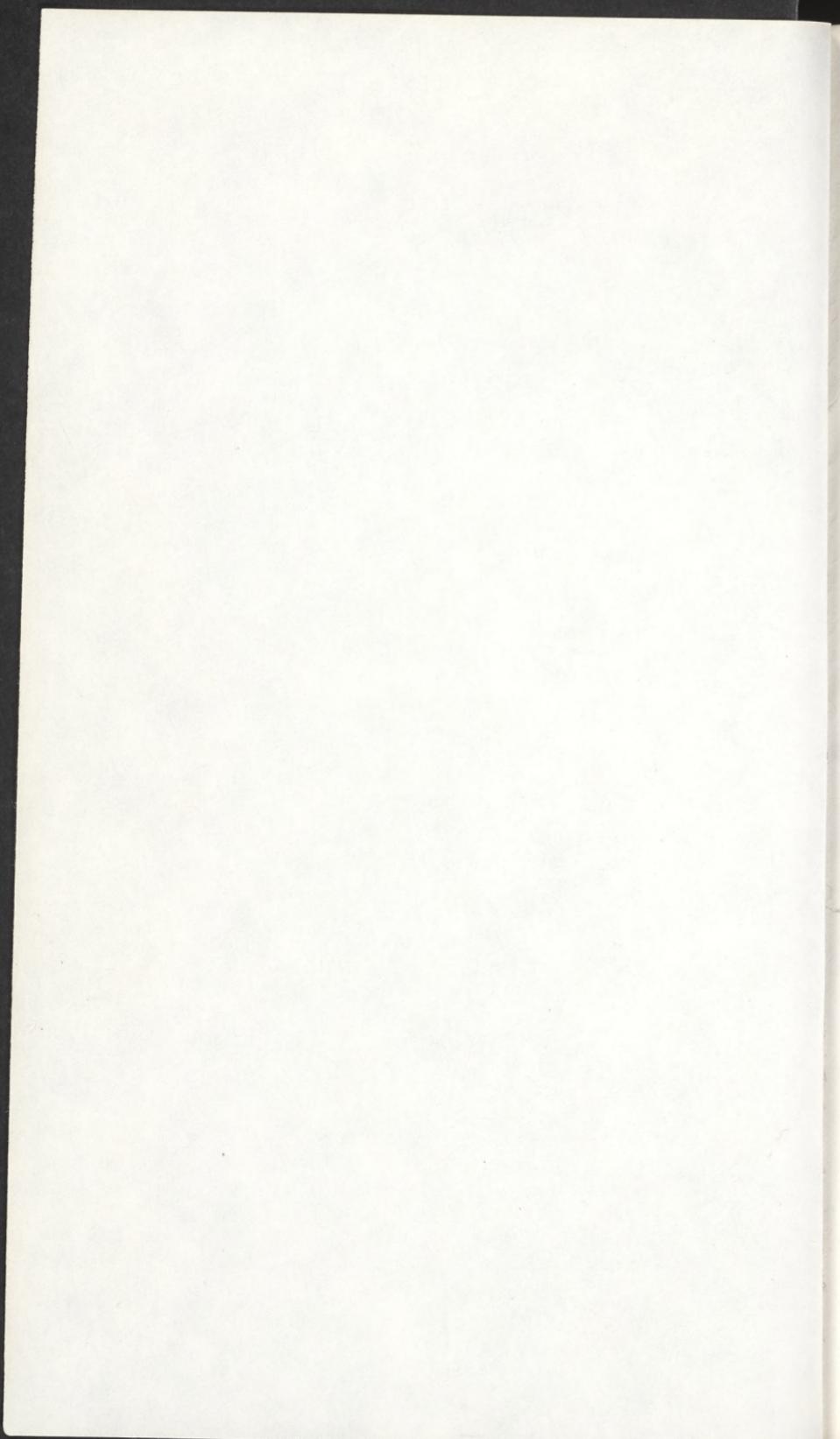
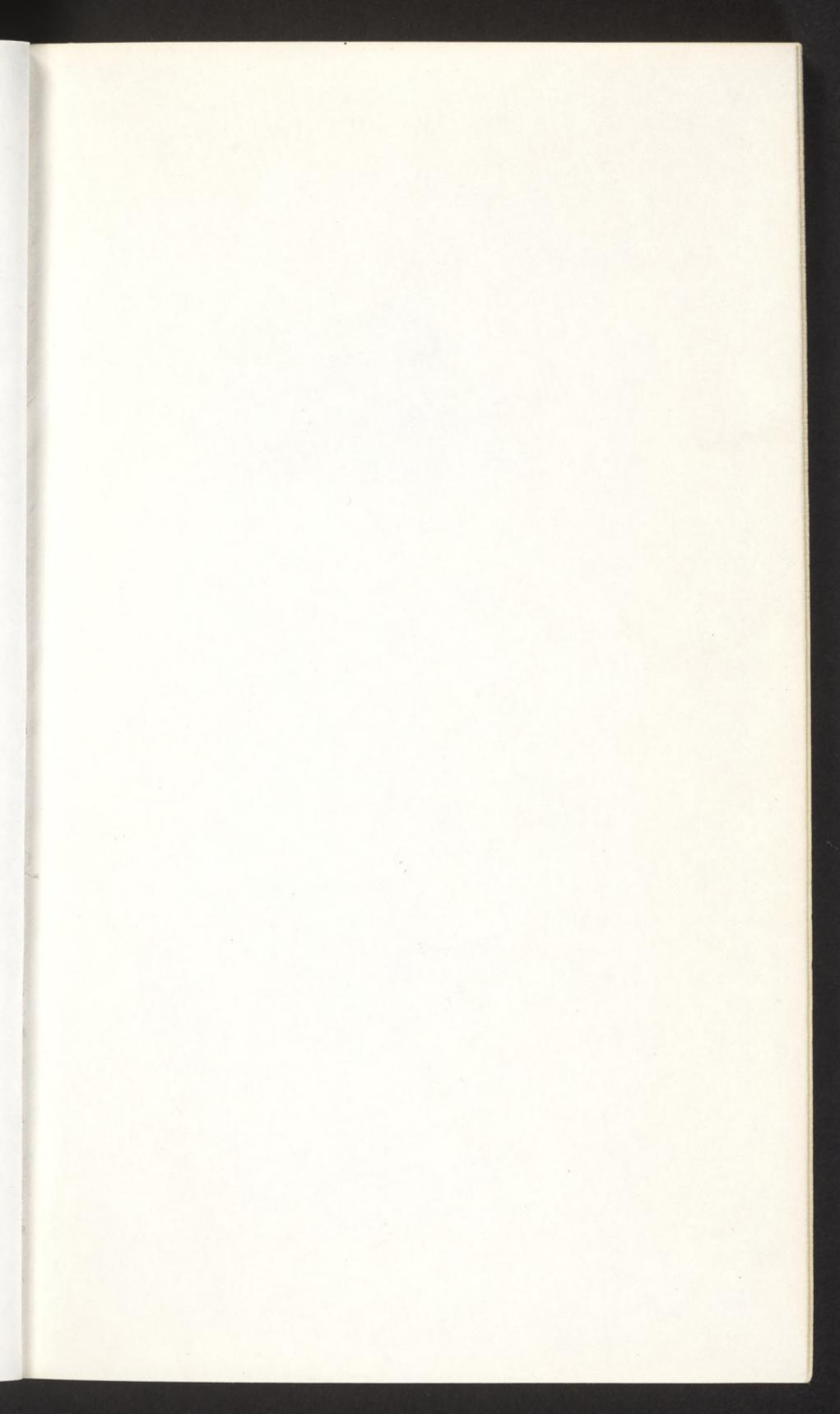
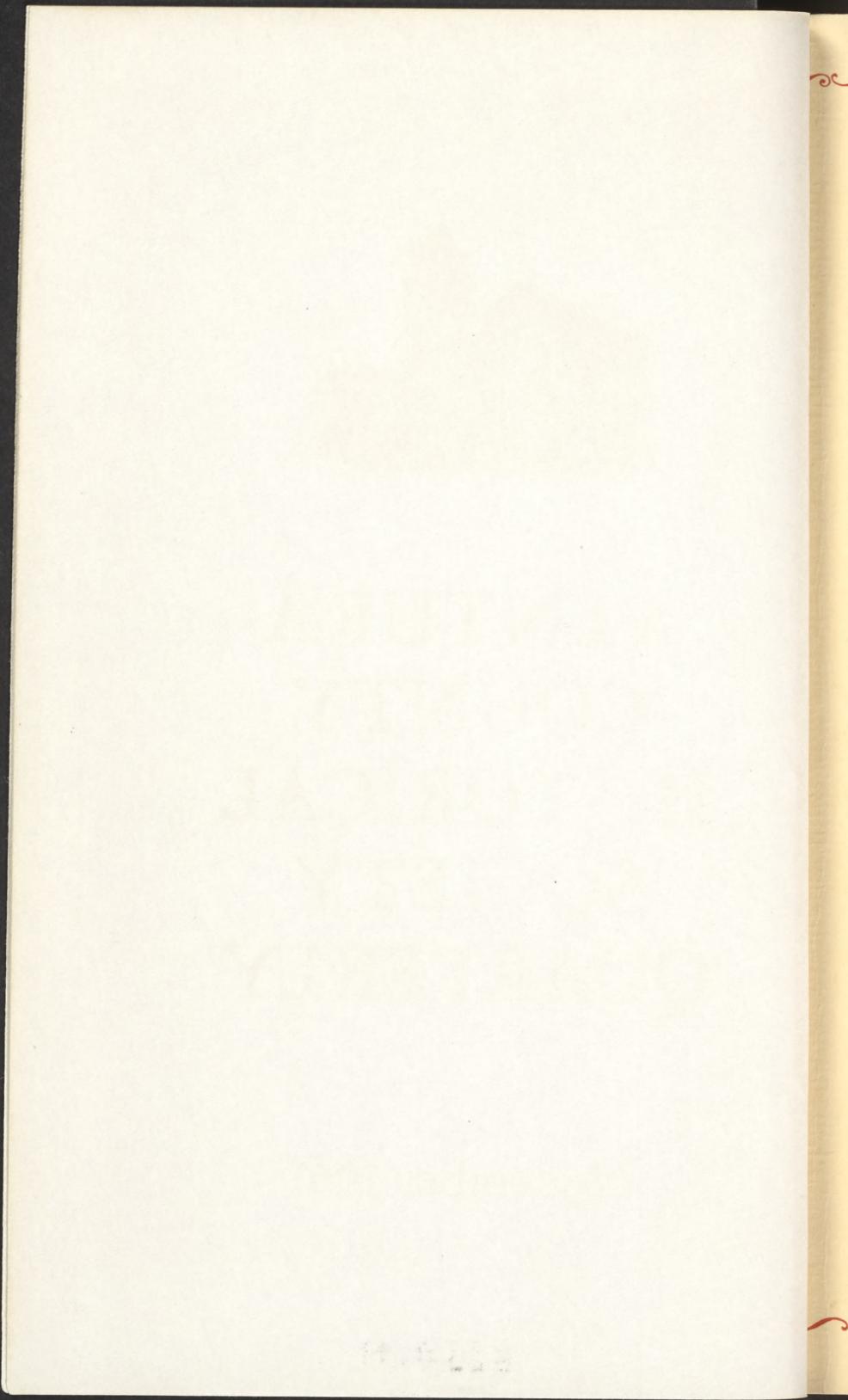
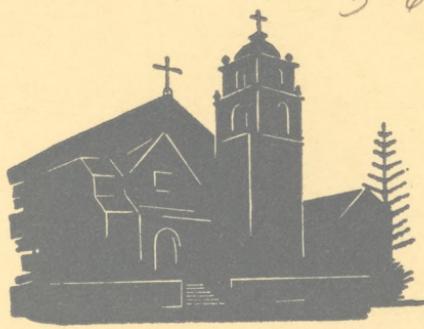


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QUARTERLY

November 1961

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## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

The Ventura County  
Historical Society Quarterly

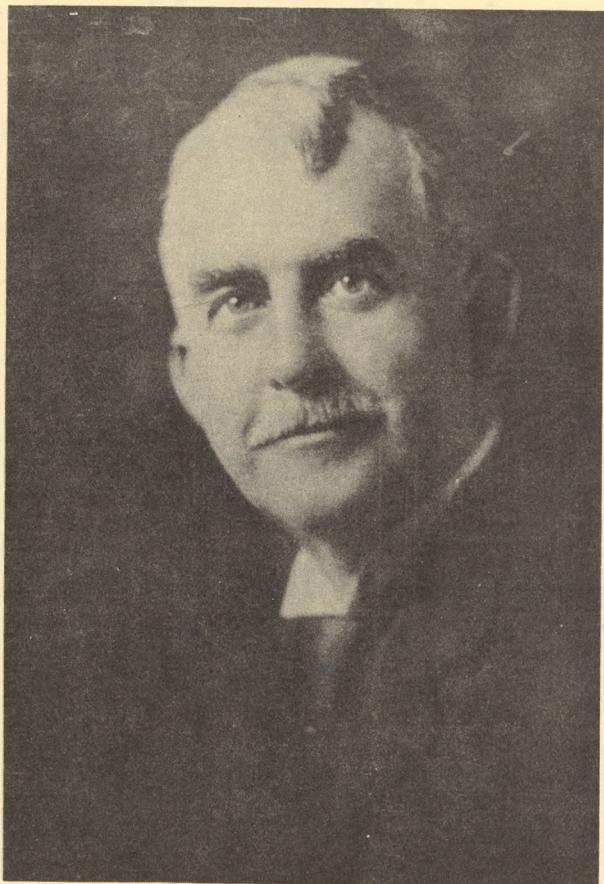
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David Tod Perkins

# Reminiscences of Early Political Campaigns

*By F. L. FAIRBANKS*

I believe my first knowledge that there was such a thing as politics in the world came with the Presidential election of 1884, when I was eight years old. That was the year when there were so many banners hung up to attract the public. Some said "BLAINE and LOGAN" while others said "CLEVELAND and HENDRICKS." There were evening celebrations on the streets. Anvils covered with powder made the most noise, while something like a hand grenade made the most excitement. My father was one of the men setting them off. In the excitement of the moment a boy stuck a roman candle under my father's coat and set it afire.

In those days each party printed its own ballot. I recall boys bringing unused ballots to school after election. The Democrats had green ones. I can't remember the color of the Republican ballot.

Each party had its own songs. Probably no one here can remember that old gag "that after you saw so many white horses you would see a red-haired girl." One of the songs the Republicans sang ended "For the Free Trade hoss is white, and Columbia's hair is red." I don't recall the significance of it.

Ventura County was divorced from Santa Barbara County and became a separate County by action of the Legislature in 1873. The first big political fight that came up was that between Pat Murphy, cattleman from San Luis Obispo County, and Thomas R. Bard, in a contest for State Senator. Murphy practically carried San Luis Obispo County in his pocket. At a political meeting in Ventura at which there was plenty to drink, some of the crowd started to hoot at Murphy because his utterance was getting thick. He said "Go ahead, vote for Bard. He can come to San Luis Obispo after carrying Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties vote, and we'll swamp them with our County vote." And he did.

One of the earliest political fights in Ventura County (but not for a County office) was that between Dave Perkins, Republican, and Brice Grimes, Democrat, for the Assembly. I think it must have been about 1890. Both of these men were pioneers, but of entirely different type. David Tod Perkins was a nephew of the War Governor of Ohio, who once replied to a man who asked him why he spelled his name with one "d." "Well, God only has one "d" in his name and we don't want to seem superior to him." The Perkins family were important people in Ohio. When Dave came out here in early days he became a partner with Thomas R. Bard in many of his enterprises, farming, oil, cattle and sheep raising. Brice was a very important person (if you took his

word for it), but instead of talking he usually orated. Brice was appointed one of the trustees of the elementary school in Ventura when it first started. An early day history of the County tells of Brice's effort to collect \$1.00 from the father of Adolfo Camarillo because Adolfo and his brother were accused of breaking a window. Hess Elkins used to collect letters Brice wrote, and I judge from some I saw that he could not spell even the word "cat."

Brice drove all over the County electioneering. Dave had been given a small Mexican pony by an admirer, and it was used for electioneering. They met one day and Brice said very pompously, "Well, Dave, if my voice holds out I've got you licked." Dave was always a great wit. He said, "Well, Brice, if my a - - holds out I have you licked." Dave gave the pony to my father after he was elected, and as I rode the pony nearly every day I can sympathize with him.

In this Supervisor District I think the campaign of 1902 must have been about the most exciting during these earlier days. At that time—(and all earlier days) you were either a Democrat or a Republican, and the men to make the race were nominated by a County convention.

Hugh Warring was a Republican, but he did not like the man named by the Convention, namely F. E. Davis of Santa Paula, usually referred to as "Pinky" Davis, because of his red whiskers. Also he didn't care to see Rufus Touchton, the Democrat, elected, so he decided to run as an Independent. He was elected, beating both of the regular nominees. Davis had been on the Board for two terms prior to that time, and Touchton, for 5 years.

It must have been about 1894 that Leachman Lewis, Mayor of Ventura, was nominated on the Republican ticket for Sheriff. I believe that it was Paul Charlebois that ran against him on the Democratic ticket. Lewis was a heavy grower of lima beans, and (according to M. L. Wolff) Lewis had agreed to sell his limas to him at a certain figure. Later (still according to Wolff) Lewis sold to someone else at a higher figure. It was the custom of grain and bean buyers to carry a little book around with them, and in it they noted that on such and such a day they had purchased from John Doe approximately so many sacks, when threshed. After Lewis refused to sell to Wolff and the beans were delivered to the new buyer, Wolff dropped all of his work and spent most of his time driving over the County and showing the little book to any voter who would listen. That was largely a one-man fight, but Lewis was defeated, by fewer than 50 votes. Lewis was a brother of Joe Lewis who once owned the land where the Camarillo Hospital now is, as well as many other acres adjoining.

Probably the political fight that caused the biggest excitement in the County was that between David T. Perkins and Major J. A. Drifill for the seat in the California Assembly in 1904. True it was in a way a side-show for the contest between Thomas R. Bard and Henry T. Oxnard for the seat in the United States Senate to be vacated by the end of Bard's term in that august body in 1904. In the latter contest, however,



Major Drifflin

the fighting was done principally by Oxnard, for Bard refused to spend "big money" in order to be re-elected. He simply said that he was running on his record and that he had no intention of "buying" the office. Dave Perkins was an easy-going man until somebody started to "rock his boat."

But to start at the beginning: Bard's election in 1899 could never have occurred except that there were so many millionaires trying to get the office, and the Railroad had recovered from the knockout blow that was given the machine when Bard was elected after a year's contest. Walter Parker was back in the saddle as the man to give the Railroad's orders. U. S. Grant had wanted to be a Senator, so had Dan Burns, formerly Secretary of State in California and badly tarred by various things, and so had many others. Bard had supported State Senator Robert N. Bulla, who probably never had a chance of election.

Bard had fought the Railroad machine on many occasions, and the machine was probably never better oiled than when the State Convention was called to order in Santa Cruz in the Summer of 1904.

The Republican County Convention was called to order in Ventura and Bard, of course, was endorsed and Perkins was nominated for the Assembly by a large majority.

When any Republican had a call — as he felt — to run for office, about the first thing he did was to go to Hueneme and talk to Dave Per-

kins. If Dave knew that Bard had no high opinion of this particular man's Republicanism, he rarely gave him any encouragement. I am not attempting to give the impression that Bard "cracked the whip" in political matters, but his influence in the County was such that very few men wanted to run for office when he knew that Bard—or Perkins—did not approve of him.

So when Henry T. Oxnard tossed his hat in the ring and said he expected to run for U.S. Senator, the fur began to fly. I never knew all of the inside dealings which led to the coming of the sugar factory to Ventura County. Rumor had it that Oxnard wanted to have the plant located in Hueneme and Bard refused to sell him the necessary land. Various reasons were given for this. Whatever they were, bad blood developed and the only real political opposition to Bard developed in Oxnard and worked outward. Major Drifill had been a Democrat prior to his coming to Ventura County. In fact, President Grover Cleveland had appointed him Collector of the Port for Southern California during his second term. However, the Major couldn't swallow the free silver policy of the Democrats in 1896 so he came to this County as a Republican and promptly dipped into Republican political matters. His chief assistant was Major P. S. Carr, at one time a Supervisor from his District. By 1904 the town of Oxnard had grown to be quite a City. The Patterson Ranch, a tract of some 6000 to 8000 acres, was leased to the American Beet Sugar Company, of which Henry T. Oxnard was President. It was in the same precinct as Senator Bard's home, and in the attempt to beat Bard in his own precinct Drifill had secured Harvey Branscomb, the bully of Calabasas, to collect a large number of men to work on the ranch supposedly, but mainly to vote for Oxnard. Branscomb had been a Constable in that community and had you been a reader of the Los Angeles papers you could read in the news almost any morning of a fight or a shooting or a riot there. When the day of the primary arrived Harvey came to the polls trailed by 150 to 200 men, all set to vote for Drifill. My father, E. B. Fairbanks, was on the Election Board, and it was his intention to challenge the votes of all of these men.

The State Republican convention met that year at Santa Cruz. You must remember that this was before the days of the direct primary. The Republicans and the Democrats each had their conventions and nominated their candidates. Some of Bard's friends wanted me to go to the convention to see what was going on, so I did. I never cared to see another. The State Senator from this District had been told that I was there to watch him, and he had been drinking too much so he decided to come over to the lobby of the Sea Beach Hotel and tell me what he thought of me. It was not especially flattering. Also, he said he was considering punching my face—I suppose with the thought in mind that he might improve my looks. State Senator Robert N. Bulla, who had himself been a candidate for United States Senator asked me to go up to Room .... (temporary headquarters) and ask permission of Walter F. X. Parker for him—Bulla—to go to Chicago as a delegate to the Na-

tional Convention. Parker was there, with Gen. Geo. Stone, Chairman of the State Central Committee, "Black" Hayes, of Santa Clara County, and another man. The answer was "no."

One of the long-to-be-remembered fights within the Republican party took place in 1902. B. T. Williams had held the position of Superior Court Judge at that time for the previous eighteen years. Williams was probably six feet eight in height, weighed possibly 275 pounds, and was a striking figure. Whenever he went to San Francisco his picture appeared in all of the newspapers and he received oceans of publicity.

But unfortunately the members of his own party, led largely by lawyers of his own party, felt that Barns and Selby were getting more than their share of the Court's favorable decisions, and that he was dominating the Party in this County, deciding who should and who should not be nominated at the County Conventions and in other respects being the "Big Boss."

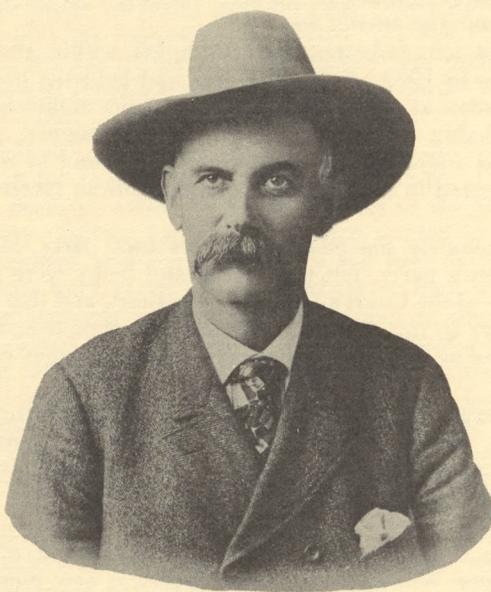
It was a very delicate situation, as none of the attorneys wished to be in Williams "bad books." So it was decided that Felix W. Ewing would be nominated by the Democrats and that he would get Republican support. It all worked out that way and Ewing took over the office on January 1, 1903.

Then came the celebration. At the same election which saw the downfall of Judge Williams, there was elected a new man for Sheriff, Ed. G. McMartin. He was not very well known in the County but made friends with all he met. A big banquet was arranged to celebrate McMartin's election as Sheriff, but really to honor Felix W. Ewing. It was a gala affair for the same reason and the banquet room in the old Rose Hotel, at the corner of Main and Chestnut Streets, Ventura, was filled to capacity. I was only twenty-six years of age at the time but McMartin had asked me to nominate him at the County Convention, which I did, and I was also at the banquet. I was working for the Bank of Hueneme at the time. It is quite possible that if I had been a practicing lawyer at the time, I would have been a little less "brash." Judge Ewing served a little more than five years, when he resigned to become a Bank President.

I think the only person elected on the Williams ticket was Ed. M. Selby for District Attorney, father of William T. Selby, and a son of Lloyd Selby, a partner with W. H. Barnes in the legal profession. Robert M. Clarke was a candidate also, and the vote between them was very close.

That was the year that I started a friendship with C. C. Teague. There was an Executive Committee of five who were supposed to settle the Republican election preliminaries. W. H. Barnes, C. D. Bonestel, and Wm. De Forest Richards, of Saticoy, really "ran the show" but C. C. Teague and I were put on as a sort of sop to the Anti's. We never knew what was going on, but we were always there and had our say.

Among the men in the County who were very prominent in politics



Sheriff McMartin

in early days were James Daly, the leading Democrat of his day, a Supervisor from the Ventura District, John Barry, a Surveyor, also Assessor for many years, John T. Show, County Clerk, also Surveyor, W. H. Reilly, A. J. Snodgrass, father of Fred, the noted baseball player, "Big Jim" Donlon, J. L. Argabrite, Marion Cannon, Paul Charlebois, F. W. Baker, and dozens of other.

Robert P. Strathearn, of Simi, usually called "Bob," was one of the stalwarts of the Republican party in the late nineties and the early 1900's. When he drove to Ventura, John McGonigle of the Democrats, usually referred to Bob as "The Laird." Politically he was a "pretty smooth article."

I think it was in 1902 that the Santa Paula delegates (at least all but Dr. Mott) insisted on nominating the Rev. Chris P. Pann for the Assembly on the Republican ticket. He was a minister in the Christian Church there. He was quite a character but his sense of humor kept him in trouble all of the time during his campaign.

The Democrats were having a good deal of trouble securing a candidate to run for Assembly, and "Bob" Strathearn thought it was a good chance to have some fun with a neighbor in the Simi, M. L. Montgomery, who was a Democrat of the old school, and with whom Bob was then at odds. So Bob started dropping a word here and there in the

right Democratic ears that his friend Montgomery was quite eager for the office, and that they might do worse. I believe that had a great deal to do with the nomination of Montgomery. At that time the Republicans had approximately 600 to 800 majority of the voters in the County, and "Bob" was looking forward to the joke he was going to have on his neighbor when the Republicans "licked the tar" out of him. Unfortunately for him Pann was constantly "making breaks" that lost the Party friends. For instance at that time the song "All coons look alike to me" was in its heyday. Pann was introduced to a Mexican one day and when the latter said he had already met the candidate, the latter said he didn't remember it, and added "all coons look alike to me." It began to look as if Montgomery was going to be elected, and Bob thought it possible that his plan was about to backfire. He occasionally dropped in to a saloon where he knew the proprietor and left a few dollars to pay for drinks for Republican friends in order to produce a friendly feeling. He went in to a saloon in El Rio (New Jerusalem then) and said to the owner, "I hear you are working for Montgomery; we have always worked together politically before; what is the matter?" "Oh," the man said, "I can't work for that S.O.B. you Republicans have nominated." "Well," Bob said, "have you ever met the other S.O.B.?" Pann was elected by only about fifty majority, so you can see that the Laird had reason to be disturbed.

As you will note, the most of the cases I have referred to involved Republicans. I could match many of them with Democratic stories, but being on the outside I am not so sure of my facts.

## San Buenaventura Justice, 1870-1871

By CHAS. F. OUTLAND

"February 18th, 1871—A complaint under oath having been made that a certain house had been forceably entered and property stolen therefrom and accusing Henry Butters as guilty of said offense, a warrant of arrest was issued . . .

"February 20th, 1871—Warrant returned and filed and defendant brought into court—Defendant instructed as to his right of council (sic) and witnesses.

"The complaining witness was reported by the Constable to be so drunk as to be unfit to appear in court—The defendant by attorney moved that the case be dismissed. Motion granted and the defendant discharged. Signed, Henry Robinson, J.P. X (His mark?)

The classical symbol of Justice—a blindfolded beauty precariously balancing the scales of right and wrong—may or may not represent a true portrayal of conditions in the Justice Court for the First Township (San Buenaventura) of Santa Barbara County in 1870. A more accurate similitude might require the addition of a dunce cap and whiskey bottle. Although Justice may have been somewhat blind and not always sober in those long ago days, at least she was the best comedienne of the era. Let us take a short ramble through the docket and observe the inner workings of law and order before Ventura County became a separate entity. We will first consider the case of the State of California vs. Jesus Saldana:

"February 17th, 1871—A complaint upon oath having been made by Maria Casterina that an assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill had been committed and accusing the above named defendant, a warrant of arrest was issued for the said Jesus Saldana. Warrant placed in the hands of L. M. Sifford for service.

"February 19th. Warrant returned and filed and defendant brought into Court. Case called. Defendant instructed as to his rights and privileges. W. F. Williams appeared as district attorney on part of the Prosecution, and W. D. Chillsun as Attorney for the defense . . .

"Case submitted and argued at length by Council (sic.) Upon fully considering the depositions which were all written and subscribed to, the Court did not find sufficient cause to find the defendant guilty as charged in the complaint. Yet believing the safety of the complaining witness demand that the defendant be placed under legal restraint, it is Ordered that the defendant be placed under bonds to keep the peace for 6 months in the sum of two hundred dollars."

To be perfectly blunt about it, the judge ruled the defendant legally innocent of the crime, but just to be sure he did not commit the same offense again a \$200 peace bond was imposed!

Possibly Justice of the Peace Robinson did not wish to tarnish the almost perfect record of his court for the preceding fourteen months

by bringing in a conviction against Saldana. During that period of time in cases where the defendant had pleaded "Not Guilty," only one verdict convicting a defendant had been recorded in the docket. The judge and jury would listen to the evidence and with monotonous regularity bring in the verdicts of "Not Guilty." Nor were these petty cases involving minor infractions of the law. They ranged from horse stealing to murder; and the principals were some of the choicest renegades to be found anywhere in the west, a fact that may account for the lack of convictions. Not until the advent of Perry Mason would the country see so many "innocent" people accused of serious crimes. Truly, this was the Golden Age of Acquittals.

There were no complete transcripts made of evidence presented in those early days, and the records in all cases were merely brief summaries of what transpired in the courtroom. A fair appraisal of the facts can usually be made despite this exasperating lack of accuracy. The crime of Grand Larceny, for example, nearly always referred to horse stealing; and these cases were not at all infrequent. A common pattern was followed in which a deposition would be made by the accuser, a warrant issued for the arrest of the suspect, followed by his appearance in court in a day or two to answer the charges. Then these words will be found terminating case after case:

"The prosecuting witness failing to appear, and the Attorney for the Prosecution declining to prosecute the case further, the Court ordered the Defendant discharged."

There can be little doubt that fear of reprisals was the prime motivation for this deplorable state of affairs. It is also evident that many rugged individuals placed themselves above the law and considered they could carry out justice quicker and more satisfactorily than the courts. A prime example is found in the Case of the People of California vs. Henry Klokow, charged with Grand Larceny.

The charge had been brought by one Anthony Fisher, who named four witnesses to substantiate his claims. On the following day when Fisher and his witnesses failed to appear in court, the charges were dismissed. But now the shoe was definitely on the other foot, for the People of California brought two actions against Mr. Fisher:

"March 23rd 1870—Upon complaint and deposition under oath of Henry Klokow that the crime of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill had been committed, a Warrant of Arrest for the above named defendant was issued and placed in the hands of Constable Gibson."

"March 23rd 1870—Upon complaint and deposition under oath of Henry Klokow that the crime of arson has been committed in the destruction of property by fire in the Santa Clara Valley on what is known as the Colonial (sic) Rancho, a Warrant of Arrest was issued at this date for the arrest of the above named defendant. Warrant placed in the hands of Constable Gibson."

The example cited is not unique but rather typical of the times.

Assault and arson in 1870 quite frequently constituted the final "court of appeals."

It is impossible, of course, at this late date to judge the merits of the cases of Klokov, Fisher, or the People of California. The last reference to the matter in the docket states that warrants for the arrest of Fisher had been sent by mail to Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, and San Francisco. The inference is that Mr. Fisher successfully evaded the law until the case was forgotten.

The record of only one conviction in eighteen months was bad enough, but there were other considerations that would deter the most indignant complainant from taking his grievances into court. Consider the case of The People of California vs. John Williamson.

Williamson was brought to trial on July 8, 1870 before a jury of his fellowmen charged with petit larceny. The witnesses were heard and the case argued at length by counsel, after which it was submitted to the jury. At 9 p.m. the following verdict was brought in:

"We the jurors summoned and sworn to try the above entitled case find the defendant NOT GUILTY—and this a malicious prosecution." Whereupon the judge discharged the defendant and "the Court in consideration of the unanimous opinion of the jury charges the court costs against the prosecuting witness."

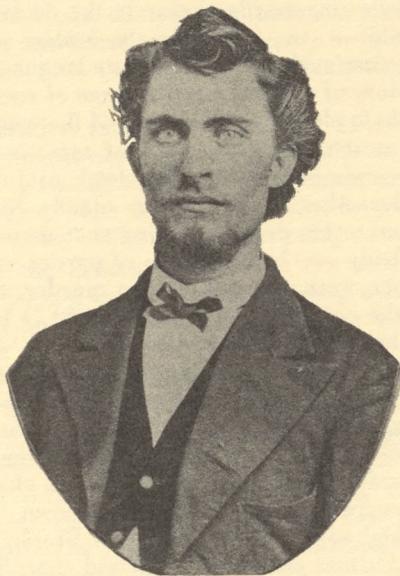
If juries of 1870 became somewhat monotonous with their universal belief in the innocence of all mankind, they were equally determined to receive their own just rewards in the form of jury fees. Not infrequently they demanded remuneration before the sealed verdict was opened and read by the court. The case of James Leonard vs. Ole Nelson was an excellent example.

Leonard was suing Nelson to recover \$103.00 which he claimed was due him under an expressed contract. Ole denied the charge and asked for a jury trial. (And they say Swedes aren't smart!) After an unusual amount of legal wrangling, the case was given to the jury with these results:

"Court called at half past 5 o'clock p.m., jurors called, parties to suit present. Foreman of Jury J. H. Hornbeck presented to the Court sealed verdict and demanded fees. Verdict examined privately by the Court, handed or returned to the jury as imperfect and ambiguous (sic). Jury asked for instructions on matters of law. Instructions given by the Court and jury again given in charge of the constable. Court again called. Jurors all present. Foreman of Jury presents sealed verdict and demanded fees. Fees paid by Attorney for Defendant. Verdict read by Court, the following being a true copy—

"James Leonard, Plaintiff vs. Ole Nelson—We the jurors in the above entitled case find for the defendant in the sum of one dollar. H. H. Hornbeck, Foreman."

It is interesting to note in the above case that while the defendant paid the initial jury fees, the court, in view of the verdict, charged the \$93.25 cost of the trial to the plaintiff. One cannot but ponder the sig-



Constable Sifford

nificance of the sealed verdict under these circumstances and wonder if verdicts were based upon justice or the ability of one side or the other to meet court costs, particularly jury fees, better than the other.

Mr. Leonard not only lost the civil action to the Swede, he also held the dubious distinction of being the only defendant in 18 months to plead "Not Guilty" to a criminal or misdemeanor complaint and be found guilty thereof. The charge was fighting in the street and otherwise disturbing the peace, along with a John Doe. In all probability Leonard would have "beat the rap" on this rather inconsequential charge if he had not made the mistake of calling the judge a few unprintable names and otherwise using "vile and abusive language in the presence of the Court." The judge found him guilty of Contempt of Court and fined him \$25 for the infraction. For the lesser offense of fighting in the street and disturbing the peace, the fine was \$5. Upon apology from Leonard, Judge Robinson remitted the \$25.

No one can deny the right of a judge to act as *custos morum* in his own courtroom, and the action of Judge Robinson in finding Leonard in Contempt of Court was justified. However, if the record is any criterion, Robinson was no pot to be calling the kettle black in the matter of obscene language while court was in session. In the case of Peter Bohn vs. E. A. Duval a Mr. Chillsun, counsel for plaintiff, had made himself somewhat objectionable to the court by demanding an ad-

journment, a change of venue, etc., etc. Immediately after this legal maneuvering the following words appear in the docket: "Court's opinion of Chillsun, a s - - - a - -." Only the author of a modern best-seller would dare to use such vile and obscene language. The judge was entitled to his opinion, of course; but the usage of such a term from the bench could do little to elevate the decorum of the court.

Probably the most remarkable series of cases in the docket began with a routine coroner's inquest into the death of John Brophy of the Sespe Ranch on December 11, 1870. An equally routine verdict was returned: "He came to his death by being shot through the heart and other parts of the body . . . by the hands of parties unknown." On the same day eleven men were arrested for the murder, two of whom had already served on the coroner's jury that brought in the above verdict! But this was only the beginning of the farce.

The eleven defendants in the action had been named by a William and Josephine Leveck, presumably man and wife, although presumptions are admittedly dangerous when dealing with San Buenaventura social technicalities in 1870. The day after the arrests the number one defendant in the murder complaint filed criminal charges against the Levecks and a Levi Sweeny for "harboring known or believed to be horse thieves and highwaymen," namely John Brophy, William Hardy, and William Ury. Further complaints followed charging Hardy, Ury, a Joseph Smith, John Doe Riggan, and Sylvester Hardy with Grand Larceny.

Of the eleven men originally charged with the murder of Brophy, only one was held to answer; and his case was dismissed on the 28th of December, 1870: "Case called—prosecuting witness being absent. Defendant examined and discharged."

As for the remaining ten participants the charges had been reduced from assault and murder to participating in a riot! The men refused to plead guilty to even this lesser charge and asked for a jury trial. There were, as usual, no prosecuting witnesses when the case was called; and "the District Attorney moved as there was no evidence adduced that could criminate the parties accused that the case be dismissed and the defendants discharged." As a fitting climax the costs were charged to the county, and the men charged with stealing horses bound over for action by the Grand Jury!

The question of who would pay the court costs, particularly jury fees, presented some interesting situations; although the law would appear to have covered the point adequately. As has already been noted, in at least one instance a witness for the prosecution ended up with the tab. The acme of absurdity, however, was reached in the case of Kyle vs. Williams.

E. Kyle was suing W. F. Williams for \$299.99 personal damages allegedly sustained through assault and battery. There is nothing in the record to indicate how plaintiff arrived at such an odd figure, but the wording in the judge's instructions to the jury would indicate that

in the court's opinion the damages sustained were possibly more imagined than real. Under normal circumstances whoever lost the case would also have to pay court costs. However, in this instance the jury returned at two o'clock in the morning hopelessly deadlocked and were dismissed.

Court reconvened at nine o'clock, and the defense moved that "the jury be paid by Plaintiff according to law." The motion was objected to by counsel for plaintiff, and a lengthy argument followed. Judge Robinson finally ruled "that the jury fees must be paid by the Plaintiff before the case proceed." The ruling was excepted to by plaintiff.

At this point the defense moved that the court find plaintiff in contempt for not paying the jury fees, it being a lawful order of the court. The judge, however, overruled the motion on the grounds that the court had not issued an order, "the ruling of the court being a decision of a law point upon a motion raised."

By now the late jury was becoming decidedly uneasy over their chances of getting paid; and through their foreman, Brice Grimes, demanded their fees "in the sum of twenty dollars gold coin."

Plaintiff still refused to pay the jury, and defendant naturally moved for dismissal since the law stated the case could not proceed until they were paid. The ruling of Judge Robinson is most interesting:

"The Court rules that inasmuch as the express language of the Statute is, 'If in any trial of a civil case the jury be for any cause discharged without finding a verdict, the fees of the jury shall be paid by the plaintiff but may be recovered as costs, if he afterwards obtains judgment and until (sic) they are paid no farther proceedings shall be allowed in the action,' the Court therefore overrules the motion and adjourns the case upon his own motion until Wednesday the 17th day of August A.D. 1870. . . ."

The jury had still not received their twenty dollars in gold coin on the 17th, and Judge Robinson dismissed the suit. Presumably, they were never paid. It may be sheer coincidence, but no other jury was so indiscreet as to hang themselves in the remaining period covered by the docket.

While the criminal actions in the First Township Justice Court during 1870-71 are naturally more appealing, civil cases were in the majority and help portray a vivid panorama of a way of life during an era long gone. These actions, in general, were suits brought to collect overdue bills or notes, and were almost invariably sustained by Judge Robinson or a jury. In fact the record here is as lopsided in favor of plaintiffs as the criminal decisions were for defendants. No less than eighty-two law suits to recover unpaid bills were filed in the eighteen months period covered by the docket. These were primarily for very nominal sums, usually less than \$50 and often for as little as \$5. Attachments on any tangible assets the defendant might have often accompanied the suit. An interesting and typical case is that of I. C. Isbell against Horatio Stone to recover \$141 of a promissory note.

State of California  
County of Santa Barbara  
Forest Township

The People of the State  
of California, Plaintiff  
vs

Henry Klokov, Defendant

In Justice's Court  
before Henry Robinson  
Justice of the Peace

Communal Complainant  
Grand Larceny

March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1870 Upon deposition  
of Anthony Fisher upon oath a  
Warrant of Arrest was issued for the  
above named defendant and placed  
in the hands of Constable Gibson - -  
Upon request of Anthony Fisher  
the following witnesses were subpoenaed  
Ludwick Remond and Mrs Remond  
his wife and Ludwig Fisher. -  
March 23<sup>rd</sup> Warrant of Arrest  
returned and filed and defendant  
brought into court - -  
The case was called at 10 O'Clock  
A.M. and defendant informed of  
his rights -  
The prosecutor, witness failing  
to appear, and the attorney for  
prosecution declining to prosecute  
the case further  
The court ordered the defendant  
discharged -

Henry Robinson J.P.

Cost Charged to County -

\$ 3.00

Constable's fee -

Dr. Isaac Chauncey Isbell was an interesting character who has been somewhat overshadowed in Ventura County history by his wife, Olive Mann Isbell, sometimes referred to as the first American school teacher in California. The Isbells had crossed the plains in 1846, and the doctor had made a small fortune in the early days following the discovery of gold. They had then returned east, eventually using the money to purchase a large ranch in Texas. Being anti-slavery in their sympathies, the Isbells hurriedly "evacuated" Texas at the outbreak of the Civil War by riding across Mexico to the Pacific. By the late 1860's they were operating a hotel in San Buenaventura.

In filing suit against Stone, the doctor apparently wanted to be sure he attached enough of defendant's property to collect in full: "Attachment returned and filed on the 5th day of February, 1870 by virtue of which the following property was attached: One dark bay colt with star in forehead and white nose, one dark bay colt rather small, each about two years old, one combined reaper and mower, 1 bellows, 1 anvil, 1 hand hammer, 1 vice, one thrashing machine with all belts &c. appertaining thereto."

Normally it was not necessary to carry a case through to the point of auctioning off the attached property, but in the above suit the horses were sold at public auction on the courthouse steps for \$100. The balance due on the note was forthcoming before the end of the year.

The San Buenaventura Justice Court should be rated from the record as the best bill collecting agency in the history of the county.

The most intriguing civil actions were those brought under the Trespass Act of 1866 and the later amendments thereto. Here in all its glory is found the classical western friction between the cattleman and his desire for the open range, and the newly arrived settlers whose primary interest was in tilling the soil. The Trespass Act as passed by the legislature was designed to "protect agriculture and to prevent the trespassing of animals upon private property . . . That portion of the First Township of Santa Barbara County in the Santa Clara Valley between the Santa Clara River and the Los Posas Creek was a portion of the territory to which the law applied and entitled to protection."

This law, like so many in the statute books, appeared on the surface to be a fine act and one that could easily be administered in the courts. In practice, however, interesting complications often developed. A hypothetical case will be used to illustrate the point:

Assume that the Widow Smith looks out her kitchen window one fine morning and sees Rancher Jones' two bay mares feasting on the last of the widow's ripening broccoli patch. The good lady realizes that Jones is away for a few days, so she and the children run the offending mares into the Smith's corral. Now the widow is kind-hearted and cannot let the horses go hungry, so she feeds them from her own haystack. Under the Trespass Act of 1866, Mrs. Smith is entitled to damages and the costs of feeding the animals until they are claimed.

Few persons would question that the widow has a valid and just

claim; one of those few would be Rancher Jones. Upon returning home, he not only finds his two mares are missing, but also that he is a defendant in a damage suit under the Trespass Act. Jones has little use for the ever increasing number of "clod-busters" coming in to settle the valley. He has even less respect for the stupid Trespass Act, although conceding it to be the law of the land. He does, however, know the correct answer to such a suit and immediately files grand larceny charges against the Widow Smith, namely horse stealing!

If we now remove the hypothetical Widow Smith and Rancher Jones from the drama and substitute real settlers and cattlemen in their place, intersperse the cast with some of the worst horse thieves in the west and add a motley group of squatters in supporting roles, some idea of the complications that developed under the Trespass Act of 1866 in Santa Barbara County's First Township can be imagined. The surprising thing is that so many claims were entered in the docket—being defendant on charges of stealing horses was no laughing matter in 1870. It is even more surprising to find most of these suits sustained by the court and damages rendered. They were for modest amounts in most cases, usually less than \$20. In the cases where substantial amounts of \$100 or more were asked, the claims were usually denied.

The far reaching effects of the Trespass Act upon the future development of Ventura County is one of the untold stories in the history books. The state legislature of 1866 through this one simple gesture ordained that in the future the fertile valleys of the county would become the domain of the soil tiller, not the rangeman. The consistency with which this policy was upheld by the San Buenaventura Justice Court undoubtedly expedited this agricultural development. There can be little question that heavy pressure was brought to bear by cattle interests to change, modify, or even overlook the intent of the law. When honors are dispensed to those responsible for the present highly developed agricultural economy of the county, due credit must be given to the state legislature of 1866 and Judge Robinson of the First Township Justice Court of Santa Barbara County.

## *Membership*

### LIFE

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard

### SUSTAINING

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

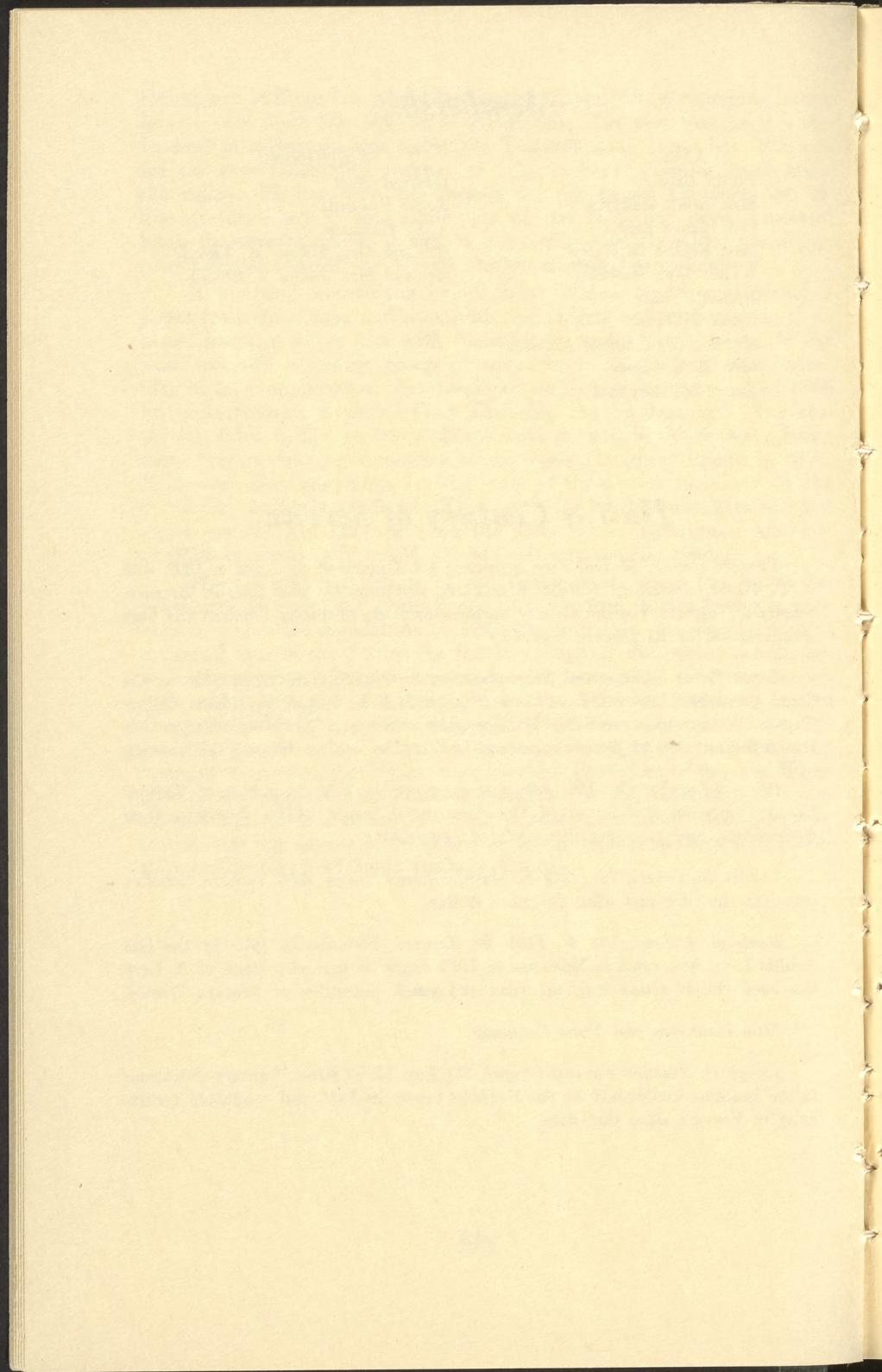
*Peoples Lumber Co.* This firm was organized in 1890 by a host of Ventura County pioneers. It has served the construction needs of its founders, their descendants, and countless thousands of newcomers.

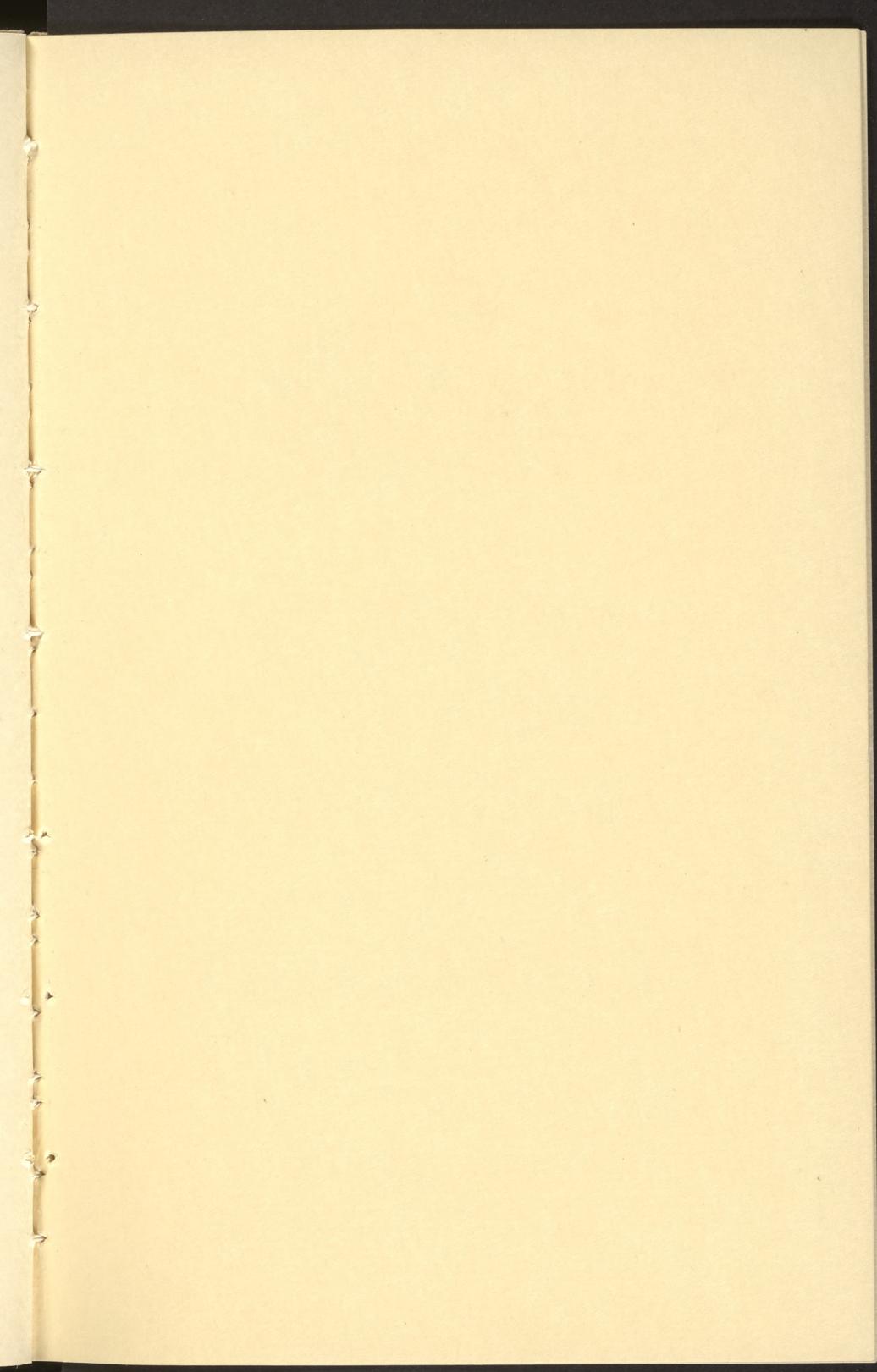
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

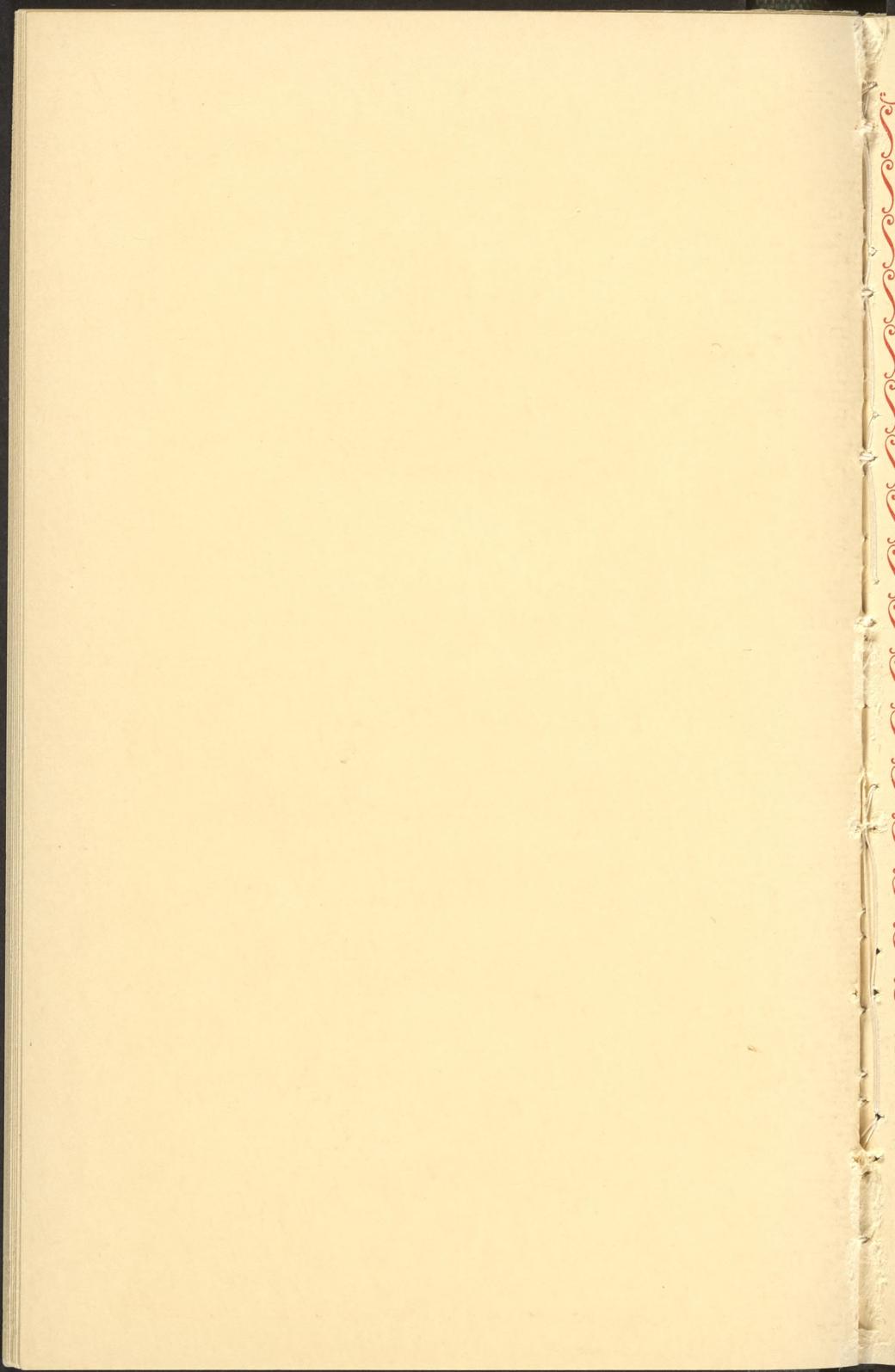
*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.









VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

February 1962

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

The Ventura County  
Historical Society Quarterly

VOL. VII, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1962

*Santa Paula High School  
70th Anniversary Issue*

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Charles Richardson

# A Half Century of Student Activities

By THE HONORABLE CHARLES M. TEAGUE, M.C.

Informal Address of Congressman Teague on the  
Occasion of the 70th Anniversary Alumni Banquet

As most of you will have read, but few will remember, prior to the establishment of the Santa Paula Union High School District in 1891, the Santa Paula Academy existed for two or three years. Several of the old-timers are here who were concerned about the fact that there was no secondary school at that time; and they put up some money themselves and raised a little more and for an investment of \$17,000 established the Santa Paula Academy. That included the buildings, the equipment, and any land that was not donated. Some of the leaders in that move were Nathan W. Blanchard, the original Mr. Blanchard; James M. Sharp; Wallace L. Hardison; and my grandfather, C. H. McKeveett, the father of my mother, Harriet.

In 1891 the Santa Paula Union High School District was incorporated and came into existence; and in that first graduating class in 1894 there were four graduates: Grace Sharp, Harriet McKeveett, Carrie Boor, and Jessie Todd.

Grace Sharp Thille was one of the earliest women graduates of Cooper Medical College, now a part of Stanford University. Grace has dropped that "Doctor" now, but you may not realize she practiced here in Ventura County for several years.

My mother, as you know, has had a little difficulty with her eyes but there is nothing the matter with her "think department." If anybody wants to know when the Petrolia Hotel burned down or when Balcom Hall was built or anything else in the entire history of Santa Paula, I can guarantee you that my mother has the answer.

The other two members of that original graduating class, Jessie Todd Browne and Carrie Boor, passed away some years ago.

The *El Solano* first made its appearance in 1900. I did get hold of that somewhat dilapidated copy in the school library, and I am afraid it is a little more so now that I have perused it. There are interesting advertisements in that first edition; Browne's Grocery Store, and the Cash Dry Goods Store, a store many of you will remember. There are several Occidental alumni here; Occidental College has an ad in there soliciting students. They were badly in need of students in those days. Davis and Drown Livery Stables had this ad: "Girl Always Like to Ride Behind Our Horses." The Ventura *Free-Press* advertised an average weekly circulation of 1608; and the First National Bank of Santa Paula, for you bankers who are here, had this impressive ad: "Capital \$75,000, surplus \$25,000."

This 1900 annual was devoted quite largely to literary affairs, essays and so forth. Beatrice Todd, Edgar Sharp, Lee Hawley, and

Jenny Condit all had very interesting stories and short articles.

In that particular year there were apparently no outstanding athletic successes, but they review some records of previous years and these were most impressive to me. I suppose these records have now fallen, but they stood for a long time. Owen Robertson, in 1897, ran the quarter mile in 51 and 2/5th seconds, and Lafe Todd the mile in 4 minutes and 42 seconds. There have not been too many athletes through the history of Santa Paula High School who improved on those records.

In 1901 there were eight members in the graduating class. The *El Solano* again was almost entirely of a literary character, including some very beautiful pictures of Echo Falls. Thomas E. Robertson was the editor; J. M. Sharp was the president of the board of trustees. This was the first year that the high school was accredited by the University of California.

1903 such names as these appeared in all sorts of activities in the school year: Nicely, Youngling, Boar, Richardson, and Alice Titus.

In that same year Santa Paula High School with just a handful of boys almost won the Southern California Track Championship. The reason they did not — there was a young man by the name of George Caldwell, none other than our George Caldwell, who was a championship sprinter from Pasadena High School. He ran the 100 and 200 yard dashes in very good times, and I think he also ran the 440. So George was responsible for us not winning the Southern California Track Championship in 1903.

But there is something that was one of the most interesting things that I came across. There is a man in our midst tonight whom we all know as a philanthropist, a humanitarian, and a modest, wonderful man; but he was also the Southern California high school shot-put champion in 1903. That is none other than John Thille. He was the champion in 1903 with a mark of 41 feet. which is pretty good.

In 1904 we did win the Southern California championship. Some of the stars were Elwood Munger, Paul Taylor, and Charlie Richardson, who had just come on the scene at that time.

Again Alice Titus monopolized most of the stories and essays and that sort of thing. Alice was very prominent; and somebody wrote this about her: "Disposition saintly." I am sure no one can question that.

All members of the graduating class of 1905 were girls; there were no boys in the class at all. There was a girls' basketball team for the first time. They did not win any games, but they certainly looked very pretty in their blue bloomers and white shoes. At least one of them is here tonight. The members of the team were Hope Hardison, Elizabeth Underwood, Floy Dickenson, Cora Harvey, Stella Clayberg, and Ruth Blanchard.

1907 was another successful athletic year, and I had hoped that Ted Sharp would be here tonight because they started tennis for the first time and Ted was on the team. Now I figured out this means he has been playing tennis for 54 years, and it is no wonder he is so good.

There were fifteen in the graduating class this year, which I believe was the largest graduating class up to that time. It was also the year in which the Alumni Association was organized. The following year the faculty had grown to six, and there were twelve in the graduating class.

I have always been interested in athletics, and I was thinking down through the years who were some of the greatest all-around athletes in Santa Paula High School history. Such names as Ralph Bennett, Perry Churchill, John Munger, and Milton Teague come immediately to mind. In more modern times there were "Cutie" Brown, Fred Vaughn, "Dude" Moore, Polo Coronado, Rudy Osuna, and perhaps others I have forgotten. Gould Taylor, had he had two good legs, would have been one of the greatest athletes in the school's history. But in my own mind the contest narrows down to Charlie Richardson and Johnny Waters. I saw and played with Johnny, of course, and I always believed there was nothing in an athletic sense that he could not do. Charlie Richardson was in an earlier era, but they say the same thing was true of him. I finally decided that the award must go to Charlie Richardson because in the *El Solano* of 1908 and listed in the school records it says, "Charlie Richardson high jumped 10 feet 9 inches!"

The *El Solano* was printed by the Santa Paula *Chronicle* for the first time in 1909, and with a new format made a real interesting publication. The 1909 yearbook was dedicated to the memory of Charlie Richardson, who was drowned in a tragic accident while still a student at the University of Southern California.

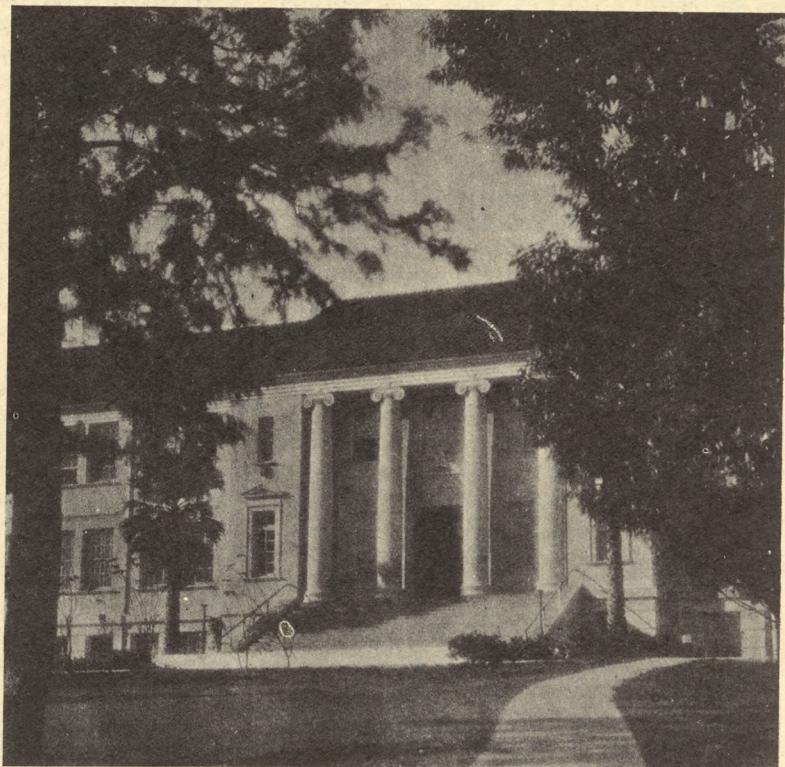
Limoneira Company had an interesting ad in the *El Solano* that year although I am not quite sure I understand what it means. It says, "Not a single car shipped under ice."

There were other interesting advertisements in that 1909 yearbook: Alice Titus was now a practicing attorney and had a card in there. I did not think lawyers were supposed to advertise, but I am sure this did not violate the code of ethics. Many of you will remember Mr. and Mrs. Greenough, and his famous old barbershop that was here for so long, still is in fact, but under different ownership. I find, "The Emblem Parlor, W. A. Greenough, Proprietor; We try to please."

The Sulphur Mountain Springs was now in existence; and it had an ad, "Stock in ground to be apportioned among stockholders on the Chautauqua Plan." This is an interesting idea, but I do not know whether or not it worked out.

That year, 1909, was the year that the Fillmore High School District was formed. The dividing line was where I assume it still is, out in the sycamores. We no longer had some of these fine Fillmore people as students.

In 1910 and 1911 the school had grown, not too rapidly, but we now had six faculty members and fifteen in the graduating class, and about 75 in the student body. Both years the *El Solano*, I thought, was excellent. They had more pictures than they had in the past. I suppose photography had developed a little more. Alice Butcher Hardison, Mar-



The high school built in 1914

garet Briggs Bassett, Edward Henderson, and Warren Hardison were prominent in school affairs, essays, debating, and plays.

1912 was the year in which Frank K. (Casey) Jones first came to Santa Paula High School. It was also the year, John, that your shot-put record was finally broken, by Warren Hardison.

According to the listing Celia Hall was the first student body president, although this fact did not show in the *El Solano*. The first time I came across a student body list of officers was for the year 1913 when Frank Davis was president. He was killed in the first World War.

In that *El Solano* for 1913 they have a listing of things that happened during the year. The freshmen receptionist said, "Meeting of Babies at horse trough; bring bathing suits and towels." Now those babies would have been, among others: Paul Leavens, Alice Martin, Winifred Cauch, Lela Fredrick, and Floyd Ransdell.

The three story concrete building which most of us knew so well was constructed in 1914. Among the school officers for that year was Douglas Shively, and he is titled with "Prosecuting Attorney." I do not know whether this had something to do with the "Casey" Jones regime or whether they had a lot of juvenile delinquents that year, but I never heard of a prosecuting attorney on the staff of student body officers.

1917 begins the period when I can remember these things myself and do not have to get all of it from the *El Solano*. This was the year that the first musical show was put on by the high school, "Windmills of Holland." Many of you will remember those wooden shoes as I do. Which reminds me that in my day, even with the great ability of H. Peyton Johnson, we did not have many boys who could sing. So when we had a musical we always had to get Millard Webster to come out of the bank to come back and play the romantic lead in all the shows. In 1917 apparently they had some boys that could sing or else the audience did not know the difference!

In 1918 and 1919 there was no *El Solano*, and school activities were very much restricted due to the war. The cost of what it would have taken to produce the *El Solano* was donated to Belgian Relief.

In 1920 *El Solano* was dedicated to the Santa Paula boys who had lost their lives in World War I. They were: Carl Carter, Frank Davis, Earl Engle, and Ruford Moreno. Incidentally, at that time there were not very many students of Latin American extraction; Moreno must have been one of the early ones.

Again this is a period of very good athletic teams, both baseball and basketball. I remember when Ralph Bennett and Cliff Argue (Oxnard High School) both jumped six feet for the first time in a high school meet. Cliff later became famous in athletics at Occidental College. George Outland, who was there on the *El Solano* staff as a freshman, had this to say: "We had a very successful season in baseball, but when Oxnard and Santa Paula played for the championship of the league, owing to cold weather we lost 7 to 0." Actually, as I recall, the great Bud Houser was at Oxnard, and he played baseball as well as track. Houser probably had as much to do with the score as the weather.

Prominent people on the *El Solano* staff in 1923 were: Ernest Toland, who is now dead but was a federal judge; Walter Whidden, who as you know is a prominent National Boy Scout executive; and George Outland, former congressman, and a noted educator in San Francisco now.

There were eleven on the faculty that year, the first year at Santa Paula High School for the immortal Ellen Bailard.

The fall of 1923 was my first year in Santa Paula High School, and we had about eighty in the freshman class. The new study hall was added to the building, and we built the SP on the top of South Mountain that year. For the first time we had school buses — two red model T Fords that carried thirty-five or forty students. They were way off the ground, but they were great vehicles in those days.

The school played football for the first time in the fall of 1924. As some of you will remember, we played up on a vacant lot between Virginia Terrace and Pleasant Street. We did not have any practice jerseys, but Herman Hamburger contributed some kind of pink and blue shirts that we used to wear. We won three and lost three.

That year I discovered I was kind of taking over George Outland's job as sports writer, or something, and I had to write about "B" team basketball. I was a member of that very unsuccessful team. We lost every game except one; but I passed quickly over those losses and wrote that when we beat the grammar school 55 to 1 that Lyndon Byers, Elmer Hyde, Sidney Rudolph and Charles Teague were the stars!

1925-26 was the year we had a little football riot among the fans between the halves of the Santa Paula-Ventura game. I was on the football team and had forgotten the incident. I only make one claim to fame and that is that I was the very worst football player that ever tried to play at Santa Paula High. I never heard before of a quarterback blocking a punt, but I am the guy that did it. I was trying to block for Perry Churchill, and I saw this big guy coming at me and I just kept moving over. I blocked the kick and got kicked very soundly.

In 1927 Jim Sharp was the editor of a very good *El Solano*. We had a musical again, and I am sure we had the assistance of Millard Webster and perhaps some other town people to help us. I notice that Margery Cowden was listed as one of twelve beauties; I am sure you will all agree that she still qualifies.

This year we had a very good baseball team, which reminds me of a very interesting episode. Loren Ayers was a very hard playing baseball player, sort of the Ted Williams type; and when he hit that ball, it went a long way. He did not always hit it, but when he did it certainly sailed. We were playing Ojai, a team we should have beaten easily, but in the last inning we were behind six to five. I struck out, and somebody else did too; then a couple of the boys got on base and Loren Ayers came to bat. Having struck out, I was coaching on first base. Loren hit one, believe me, all the way over Santa Paula Street; he did not come within ten feet of touching first base or second base or third base. He touched home, but fortunately neither the Ojai boys nor the umpires noticed that he was a little careless. Anyway, it was a great show.

1929 was the first year at Santa Paula High School for Freeman Eakin. This was also the first year when California law required students to continue in high school until they reached the age of sixteen. So from here on the size of student body increased rather rapidly! Jack Gilbertson, our former mayor, was secretary of the student body that year. There were now twenty-two members on the faculty.

By 1930 there were three hundred and twenty-five students. The *El Solano* had some beautiful wood cuts that year. I could not determine who made them, but they were very fine. There was a truly great track team that year, consisting among others of Phil Powell, Polo Coronado, Carl Dwyer, and "Cutie" Brown.

Now in 1931 there was a very different situation. Most of the *El Solano* consisted of bound volumes of the monthly *Cardinal*. It was most interesting because it covered more fully the school activities than in the practice we usually have.

1933 saw an increasing stress on music. Much space was devoted in the *El Solano* to the girls' and boys' glee clubs, and the band and the orchestra.

In 1936 there was a very novel *El Solano*; it was almost entirely pictures; there was almost no text.

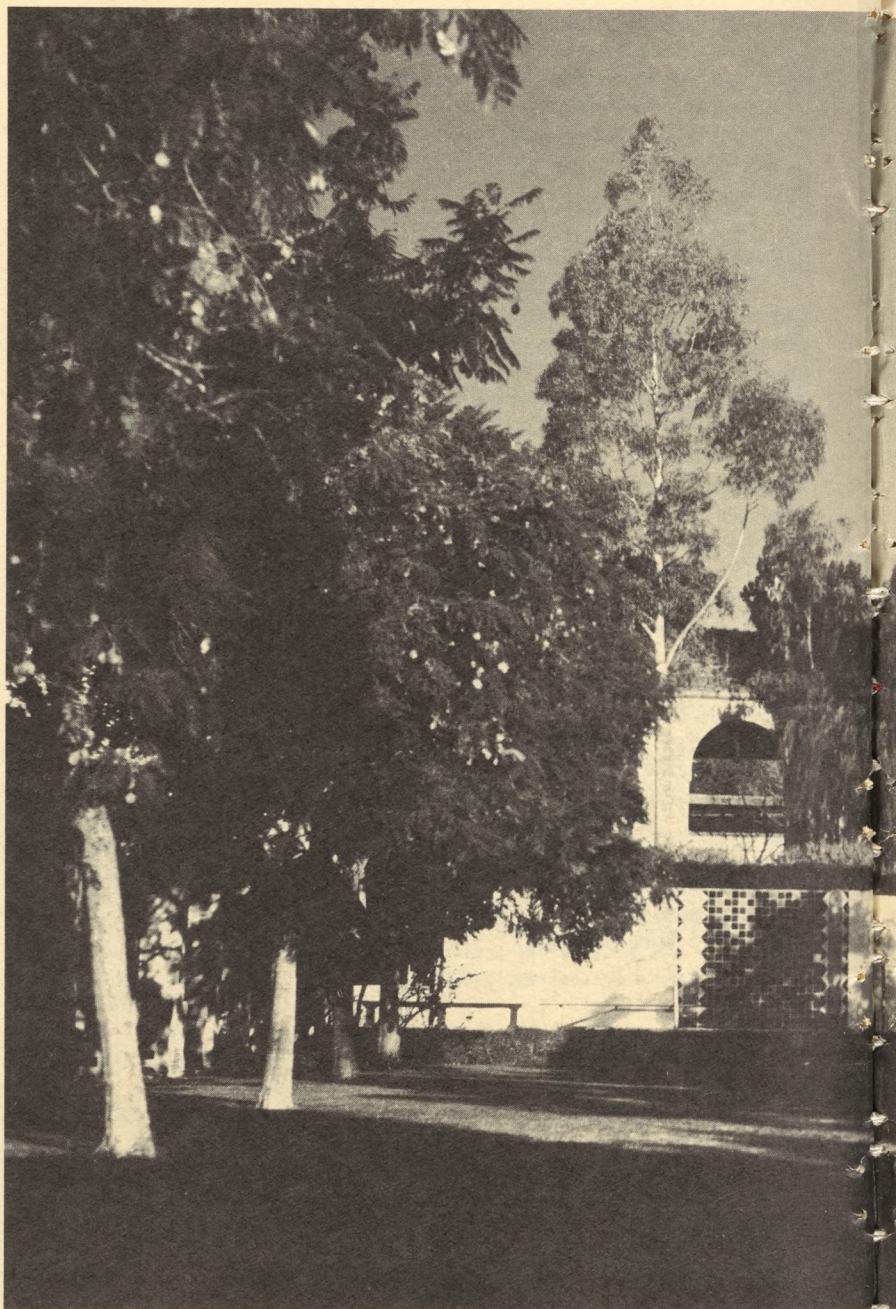
I think it was in 1937 when Rhe Nelson organized the World Friendship Club, and we all know what a wonderful thing this is. I see these exchange students frequently when they come through Washington, both from here going abroad and from abroad coming here; and there is no more important fine thing that could be done by anyone than Rhe Nelson and others have contributed in this regard.

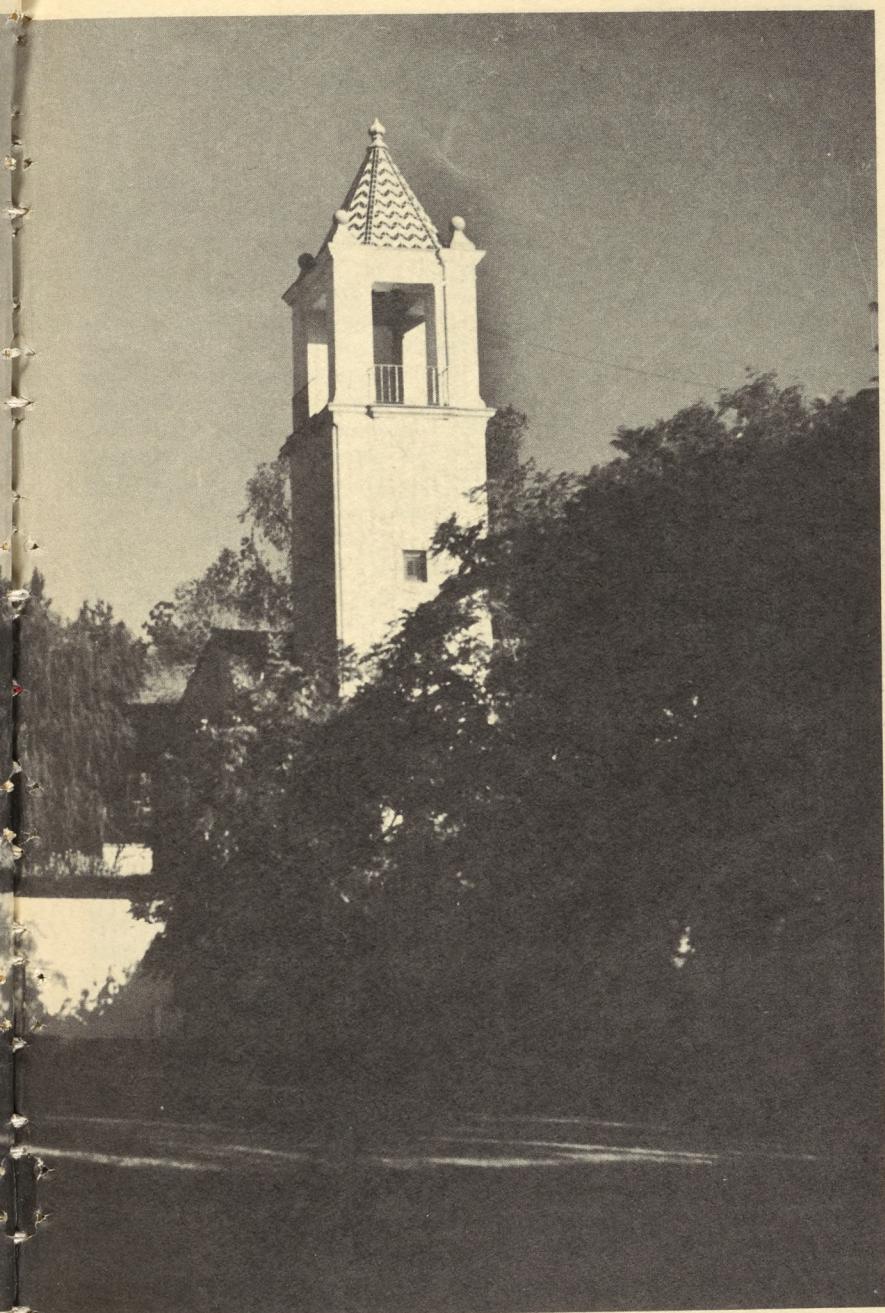
In 1941 we were getting into the war period, and some of the recent graduates were already in uniform. There was a wonderful tribute from Freeman Eakin concerning the death of Vernon Duncan, who was apparently the first Santa Paula boy to be killed in World War II.

The 1942 and 1943 *El Solanos* were somewhat curtailed in size because of the war, but the students certainly did their full part in the war effort. They collected scrap metals, sold bonds, and held raffles and auctions. By 1945 there must have been nearly seven hundred ex-Santa Paula High School boys in the service.

In 1948 the *El Solano* was dedicated to that great educator and humanitarian, Freeman Eakin. I think this is a good place to leave the story. Freeman had several years after that.

I know we are all fortunate to have had the privilege of attending Santa Paula High School, to have made such wonderful lifetime friendships, to have studied under the direction of such splendid faculty members, and to have been exposed to the inspiring leadership of superintendents and principals of the caliber of Frank K. Jones, Freeman Eakin, and Max Forney.





# Santa Paula High School, The Early Years

By GRACE SHARP THILLE

Members of the Student Body of the Santa Paula High School:

The Santa Paula High School is now seventy years old, and I thought that perhaps you young students might be interested in a few items from the days of its childhood.

The school originally was housed in one building during the first ten or twenty years of its career. On the first floor were two anterooms, a fairly wide hall, a small room serving two purposes of library and office, and a large assembly room with one separate classroom. Wide stairs led to the second floor where some laboratories were later developed. There was a basement which contained a heating apparatus.

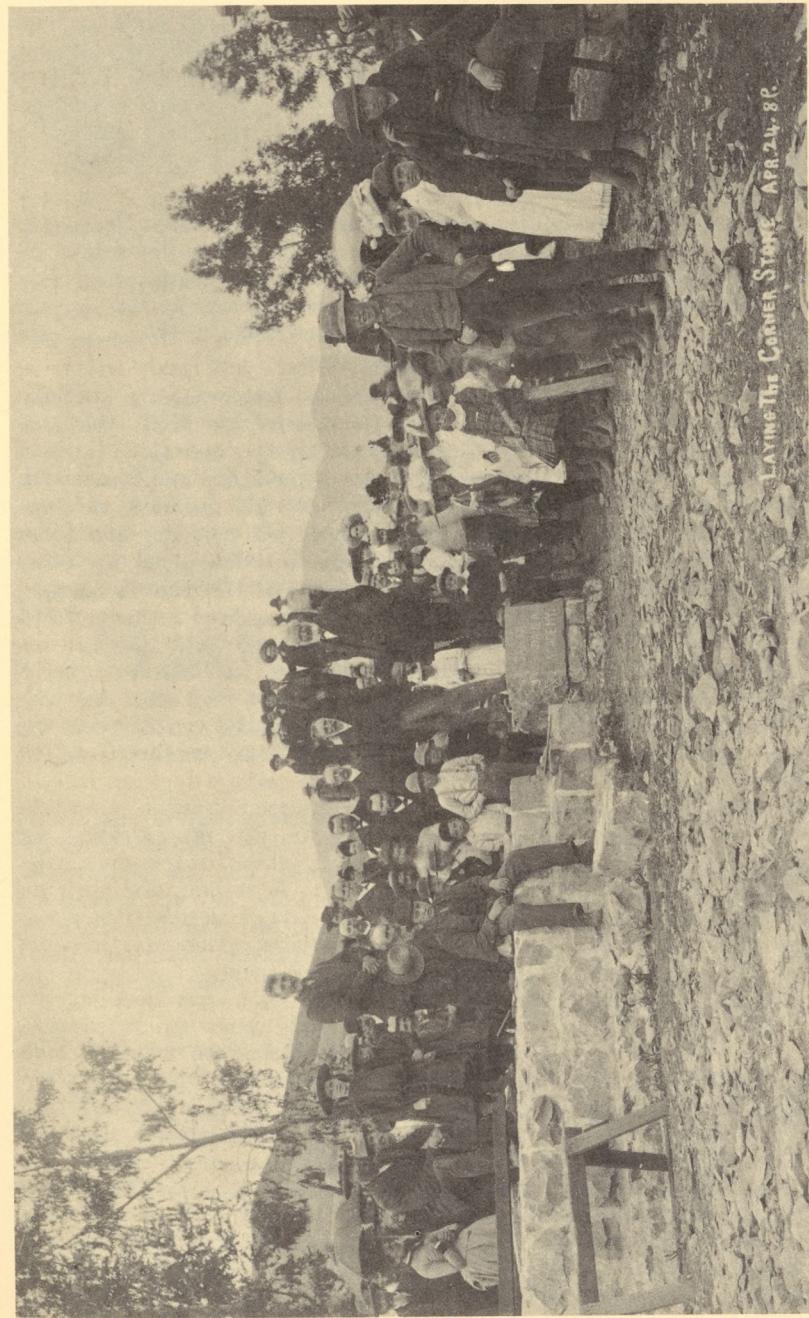
Let me digress a moment to make a few remarks about this furnace. It was largely operated by the boys of the school, and it was amazing how many times a day it had to be attended and how noisy the proceedings of feeding it could be. It was once out of commission for a few days because an ungodly young one put a skunk in it!

Outside the main building were two smaller structures. One of these I shall leave to your imagination; the other was a shed for the horses. While this latter was a fairly opened theatre it nevertheless furnished a stage for very pleasant associations of the students. Girls, you know, needed help in hitching a horse.

One night I was having some very welcome help as I was struggling with my horse; I had to drive one of the work horses that day. She was a big husky creature who did not care to be away from home and was, at the moment, bent on going back to the ranch without taking either the cart or me. A good friendly lad saw my difficulty and gave that mare a hearty, well-directed kick in the ribs, thereby giving her a more immediate problem to think about. My admiration knew no bounds; but when I undertook to follow his example, the result was a flat failure owing to the long skirts of that day. That man has just recently passed on; he and I had been life-long friends.

When the high school opened in 1891, I was just finishing the grammar grades; and I was anxious to get into Santa Paula High. At that time children were graduated from the grammar schools by an examination sent out from the office of the County Superintendent of Schools. But as I was the only candidate for graduation from Live Oaks School, the County Office overlooked me. Mrs. Holly, who was the teacher, called their attention to the oversight; and as far as I am aware, I am the only student who has entered the Santa Paula High School by means of a primary teacher's examination, the certificate for which they held up because I was too young.

I would like to take you back to those days of 1891. We lived about six miles from the school, and that first year I drove alone with



LAYING THE CORNERSTONE APR. 24. 1889.

Santa Paula Academy, laying the cornerstone, April 24, 1889

a horse and cart over unpaved and dusty roads. It took about an hour and a half to make the trip, including the time consumed by currying, harnessing, and hitching the horse and undoing it on arrival. The road was dusty; one had to keep either well ahead or well behind other rigs, especially when the east wind was whooping it up. There was not a great amount of travel on the road, but it did not require much to raise a tornado of dust.

There were few houses in Santa Paula between Main Street and the high school, and a well-developed path ran from the school diagonally to town. This path ran across the area now occupied by Skilin's Mortuary. A small water course ran over the area in the opposite diagonal, and in wet weather the crossing was difficult. That interfered with running down town during recess time.

The faculty of 1891 was small in number but large in administrative ability and ambition for the school's success. Mr. C. T. Merideth, who had been County Superintendent of Schools, was the Principal, the Dean of Boys, and chief instructor in mathematics and Latin. Mrs. Kellogg, a past middle-aged Boston lady, was his assistant, teaching English and kindred subjects. I have always felt that she was under a great disadvantage. First, physically she was hampered by being much overweight; and secondly, she was stiff and victorian in manner. She told me she was greatly surprised when she arrived in Santa Paula to find that the students were American boys and girls. She had expected to teach Indians! I imagine that at times she felt her original supposition about the Indians was right. At any rate after one year of struggling with the Santa Paula youngsters, she retired from the scene, returning, I suppose, to the more-to-her-taste atmosphere in the east.

While Mrs. Kellogg was with us, the morning session was always opened by a reading of a Psalm or some other selection from the Bible, a function which she always performed. But one morning we overheard some wrangling in the office, and she did not appear for the devotionals. After waiting a few minutes, Mr. Merideth came in, had the students rise and repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison. And I will say this could not have been accomplished more rapidly if the building had been on fire.

In 1892 the faculty was still composed of two persons. Mr. Watson Nicholson, a very fine young man, a Stanford graduate, and quite different from Mr. Merideth, had replaced the latter as principal. He was keen, interested in boys and girls, and understanding of youth and youthful pranks. He was also handicapped by poor eyesight as a result of an explosion. In place of Mrs. Kellogg there came Miss Emily Florence Beaver, young and painfully skinny. She took over the English and literary parts of the curriculum, but she also found time to get well acquainted with Mr. Nicholson. This activity resulted in their marriage a few years after they left Santa Paula.

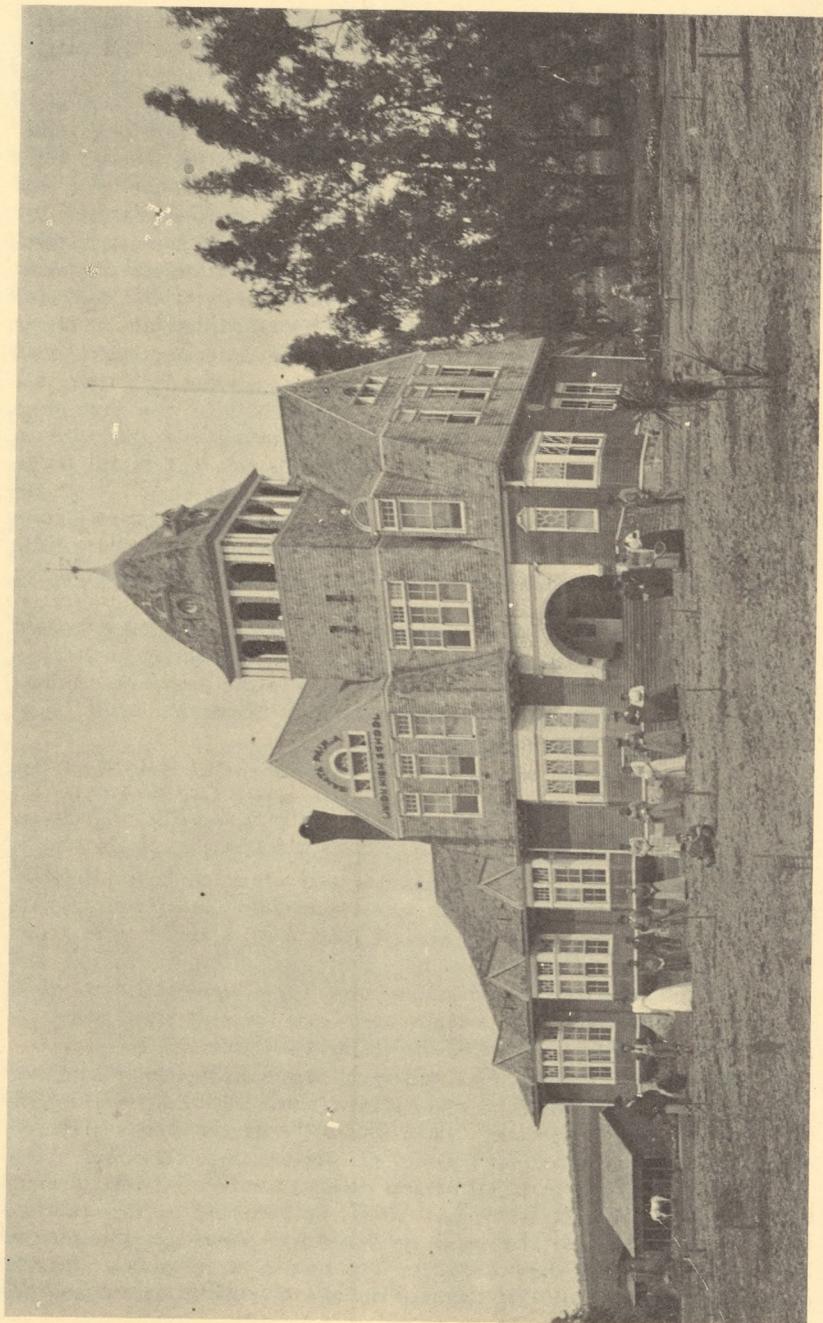
Mr. Nicholson and Miss Beaver spent two years guiding the youth of our town, and during this time the grounds around the school building were worked up and a garden planted. Oh no, not by the trustees or the janitor, but by the youngsters themselves. The boys did the heavy digging and the girls the planting and the finer cultivation. This garden enterprise turned out so well that the student body decided to build a tennis court. The trustees had no money for this undertaking so the boys brought teams and grading equipment for the initial preparation of the court while the girls with hoes and rakes made the court smooth and level, sprinkled it, and tamped it down. Then everybody contributed whatever cash he or she could, and with the teachers' help, tennis court equipment was purchased.

After everything was set up, the boys held a conference and elected officers to care for and run the tennis games; and the first thing we girls knew, the court was completely monopolized by the masculine element. One of our girls was equal to the situation. She managed to get a stand in with the janitor, and the tennis net was found to be missing. It stayed missing until the gentlemen capitulated, giving the girls equal rights to the court. Before the net disappeared, one of the gentlemen ring leaders fell down as he was playing and broke a little finger. I am really ashamed to admit that no girl was truly sorry for him.

In those early days the library had only a few books, but it housed a bust of Minerva. Miss Beaver always wore a trim sailor hat with a ribbon around its brim, and some of the girls in the school entertained themselves by arranging the ribbon around Minerva's brow. Miss Beaver did not seem to relish this.

At the end of the school year in 1894 when the first class was graduating from the school, a sort of family party was held there for the ceremony. Written invitations were sent to practically the whole town, and people crowded into the large assembly room where a short program was put on by the graduates and other students. Refreshments were served in the smaller classroom. The crowd was divided into four groups by tickets numbered 1,2,3, and 4 and it was a gay evening. I should tell all of you here that when the public affair was over we graduates went home and to bed. There were just four girls, no boys, in that class. Mrs. Teague and I are the only ones living today. The next class consisted of two boys, both gone.

I think that I should add a few more words about Mr. Nicholson. After he left Santa Paula, he spent some time at Harvard, then taught in various towns in the east. He visited a few times in Santa Paula; but as I was away at school, I never saw him on these occasions. After a few years he went to England and made a study of British drama. When the first World War came along, he returned to this country because, as he told me afterward, he thought no American should stay in England and eat their food, for the British were on the shortest possible rations. After he returned to the United States, when the



Santa Paula Union High School, 1894

time came for him to retire he settled in a small town in Michigan. I heard that he was there; and fifty years after I had graduated from Santa Paula High School, I went to see him.

Finding his house, I rang the doorbell, but no one answered. I went around the house thinking he might be working in the garden. I met him coming to the front; but of course, I had the drop on him. I was looking for him, not he for me. He asked if I was looking for someone, and I said that I was looking for Mr. Nicholson. He straightened up and said, "I am he." I asked if he knew me; and he studied me for a minute and said, "I've seen you before." I then asked him if he had ever taught school in Santa Paula. His face lit up and he said, "You are Gracie Sharp." From there on he asked me about every student who had been in the school when he was there. He called them one by one by name and wanted to know where they were living and what they had done.

There was one girl he did not mention. When I got back to Santa Paula, I inquired of some of the early school people to find out why; and I discovered she had once made a frivolous reply to him when he asked her a serious question. He had always thought her a frivolous character. Now girls this story is for your benefit; let it be a lesson to you!

As 1900 approached talk of a new enterprise began, and the *El Solano* made its initial appearance. The first number of the now famous yearbook came out in June, 1900 with Arthur DeNure as editor. It was a delicate little journal with a picture of the first high school building on its cover. I think a quotation from its salutation to the public is worthy of mention:

"In this, the initial number of *El Solano*, we launch our bark upon the rough, uncertain stream of journalism, trusting that our first feeble efforts may be accorded a kindly reception from those who have at heart the interests and well-being of the Santa Paula Union High School.

"Our school is growing, and to keep pace with it in its other departments, we feel it incumbent upon us to join the ever-increasing ranks of school-journalism, unqualified though we may be to perform the duties connected therewith.

"We are not very strong in numbers, but what we lack in that respect we hope to make up in energy and enthusiasm. Though we hope to make a breezy stir among you and bring your attention to ourselves and our work, we trust we shall not be disagreeable. We hope to come upon you, not as a blighting blast, but as a gentle lulling breeze to turn you from the dull drag of routine work, to the bright, breezy days of school life.

"None can deny that there is no better preserver of good, clean, healthy surroundings than the East-Wind; it blows out to the sea, taking with it all the germs of disease and the impurities of the atmosphere. So will *El Solano*, we hope, come as a champion to drive away mental and moral disease; diffusing the sunshine of student life over our little

world and spreading broadcast the healthy, happy thoughts of healthy, happy students."

The Indian legends provided an abundance of material for the imaginations of the writers for the early days of the *El Solano*. Let me give you a brief bit from the story of an Indian Princess far famed for her beauty and wealth. She had many suitors, among them El Solano, a wealthy Spanish Lord but a rough blustering fellow. His visits were very annoying to the Princess and as he pressed his suit, he became more and more disagreeable to her. The Gods, especially the Great Spirit, were fond of her and had decreed that anyone who harmed her should be punished. El Solano knew this and was restrained by it. But one moonlight night he seized her and carried her away. The grief of the people in the valley was unbounded, and they turned to the Great Spirit. He soon came upon the fugitives but loath that so beautiful a creature should leave this earth, he embodied her spirit in everything beautiful and lovely in the valley. Then El Solano was ordered to visit the place every year in the form of the blustering wind to see and feel her spirit but to know that she could never belong to him. This is only a sample of the Indian lore.

Travel was another topic of interest to the writers for the magazine. In the 1904 number is an interesting account of the Andes of Peru, illustrated by a picture of a bridge swinging high up over a stream. Santa Paula graduates were beginning to get around over the world. In the 1906 annual is a long and interesting account of a trip taken by Paul Taylor, a Santa Paula graduate, and a Mr. A. D. Kyle, a late principal of the Santa Paula Grammar School. On June 5, 1905 they started on this trip with a pack and a saddle mule apiece at six o'clock in the morning and made the Upper Ojai by midday, ate their lunch and staked their mules on the other fellow's barley. Ranger Miller gave them permits to carry arms on the Pine Mountain Reserve and advised them to go by the Gridley Trail. I will not give their complete itinerary, but tell you that this couple spent three months and rode eight hundred miles exploring the Sespe country and Lockwood Valley. They toured Bakersfield and up into the Sierras to Nelsons on the Jordan Hot Springs. Then across the Sierras and down to Owens Lake, back to Nelsons and then home by the Mutah Meadows, Sespe Hot Springs and Topa Topa. They had seen many of the big trees, mountain lakes, wonderful meadows, and the finest natural soda springs in the state. They had killed deer, bear, and rattlesnakes as well as caught many fish to eat.

In this same issue of the *El Solano* is a very pleasant statement on the development of Santa Paula. It begins with the assertion that for picturesque scenery no spot on earth can excel the beautiful Santa Clara Valley. There were no stores in the place until 1871. The next year several business houses were erected, a grocery store and a blacksmith shop, and several residences. By 1875 there were two hotels, and the next year a stage line came through. By 1882 there were



The Student Body and Faculty, 1894. Mr. Nicholson and Miss Beaver standing at the left.  
Grace Sharp seated at extreme right.

twenty-eight families in the town. The production of oil gave it new life, and 1887 saw the railroad put through from Saugus to Santa Barbara. The town suffered a great calamity in 1903 when fire destroyed several residences, a livery stable, the Petrolia Hotel, Oddfellows Hall, Judge Titus's office, a saloon and the city hall. The closing paragraph in this account of the town is worthy of notice:

"Santa Paula can boast of one of the best light and water systems in the country. The educational facilities rank high with those of the state. The high school building is one of the most beautiful structures of learning in this section of the country. As we have seen the town of Santa Paula is not of mushroom growth, but can better be compared to the monarchs of the woods who are continually growing and are always hearty and hale. With such an outlay as this amongst us, with the wealth of the surrounding country back of us, and with the climate of perpetual summer. Santa Paula is becoming one of the most attractive of Southern California's small towns."

I may say that all of you can see that this monarch is still growing.

As the years have gone past, this school has branched out in many directions, far too many to be given proper attention in this short time. The faculty itself has grown almost to the nth degree. The curriculum is including almost everything; the literary and debating societies, the athletic performances, fill the pages of each *El Solano*; and music, art, and domestic sciences offer courses of study.

I would like to recall to you the wish expressed in the first *El Solano* that the little magazine would make a breezy stir in the neighborhood and fasten the attention of the town to the students in the high school and what they might be doing. I will say that after carefully looking over the *El Solano* for 1961, I would congratulate you on the accomplishment of their wish. It is a beautiful volume and a wonderful record for the future.

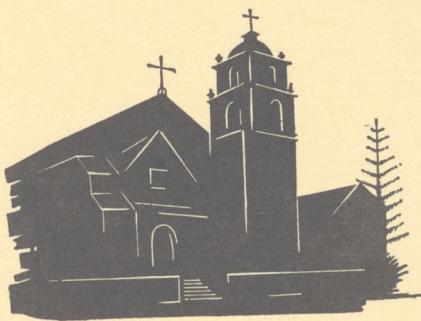
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VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

May 1962

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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Historical Society Quarterly

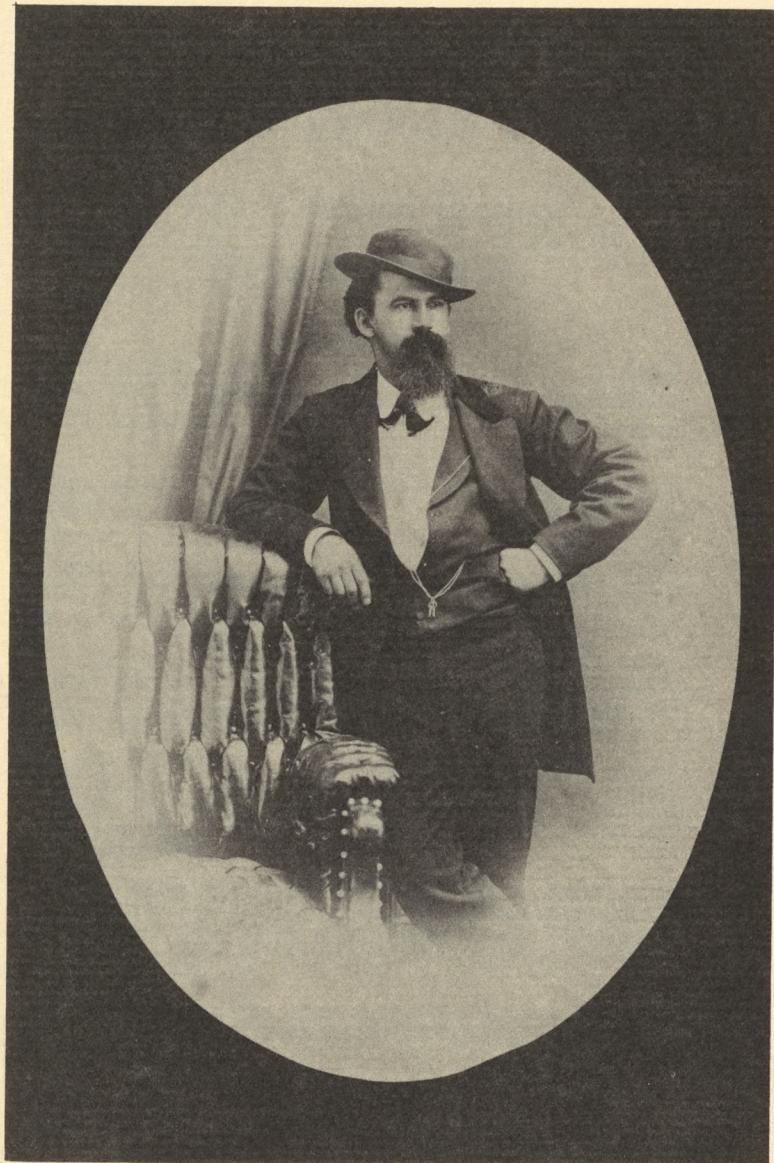
VOL. VII, No. 3

MAY, 1962

C O N T E N T S

*John Calvin Brewster,  
Pioneer Photographer*

*Photography by Brewster*



John Calvin Brewster

## John Calvin Brewster, Pioneer Photographer

By MARY TEAGUE BUCKNELL

John Calvin Brewster was born in Wayne County, Ohio on December 31, 1841. He was the second of six children born to Calvin and Harriett Brewster, and was a direct descendant of Elder William Brewster who came to this country as the religious leader on the Mayflower in 1620. John Calvin and his descendants trace their lineage through Elder William's son Wrestling.

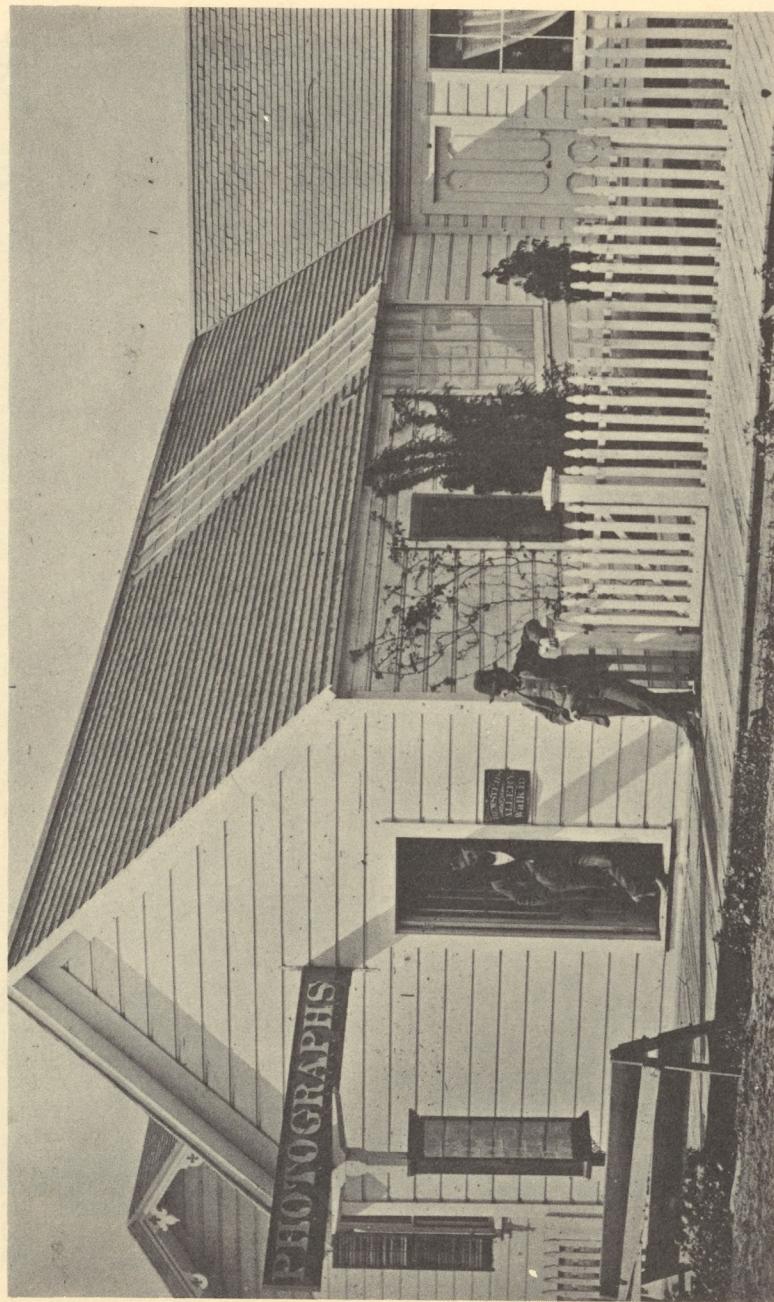
When Calvin was eight years old, his family moved to Mt. Sterling, Van Buren County, Iowa. Here he received his education, and before he was of age had taught school for several years. In 1860 he went to Warsaw, Illinois, where he studied photography; and to this chosen field the rest of his life was dedicated.

In 1862 he and his family, consisting of his seventy-five year old father; forty-nine year old mother; a half brother, Abe Daily, and a twelve year old brother, Ralph, left Mt. Sterling in two covered wagons. Before the journey was over, they had left the main group and traveled most of the way with just a few other wagons. They carried provisions for themselves and two or three extra men who were going along to help drive the teams. The entire trip took more than five months. The provisions consisted mainly of flour, bacon, beans, rice, sugar, tea, coffee, dried fruit, and ten gallons of pickles with horse radish grated into vinegar. Also a supply of dried yeast which his mother had made so that the family could enjoy good light bread while en route.

The account of their trip west was written many years later by his sister, Laura Brewster Boquist, in 1918. It is a most fascinating account telling of their hardships, experiences with Indians—both friendly and unfriendly—and with some rather unfriendly Mormons.

Just before reaching Salt Lake City, Calvin contracted Mountain Fever and was very ill. The family stayed in Salt Lake City for some time until he was able to travel again. His mother, with her well stocked medicine chest, was the only doctor he had. She was well known for her medical skills and successfully treated many cases of illness on the plains.

The family crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which they called "grand and beautiful beyond description." There Calvin again contracted Mountain Fever, and a few days later his sister, Laura, also became very ill. The family continued on to Sacramento with one wagon devoted to the ill members of the family. Probably due to these two attacks of fever, Calvin Brewster lost his hair, which had been thick, black and curly. Many pioneers who remember him will recall his baldness, or the black skull cap he habitually wore.



Brewster's Oak Street Studio

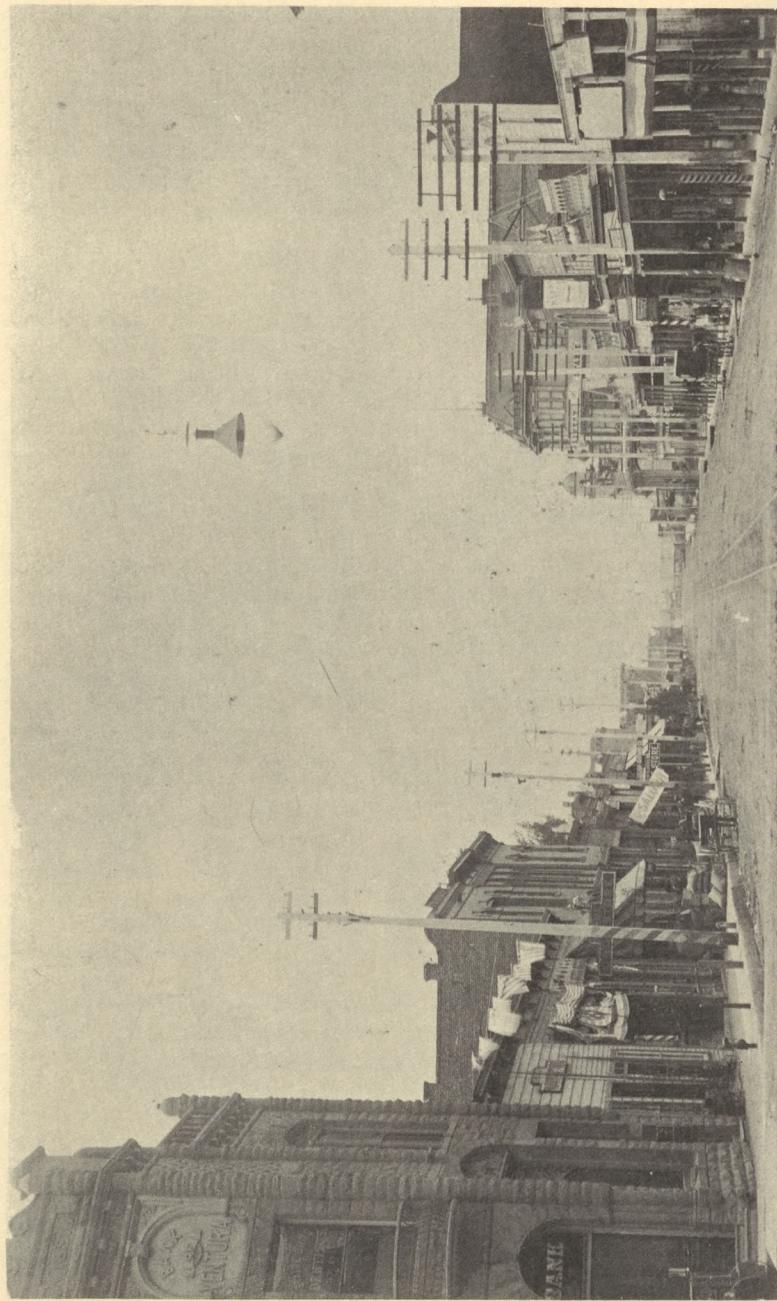
In Sacramento his father built the Russ House, which became one of the famous hotels of that period. Here Calvin again taught school and practiced the art of photography. His health restored, he began traveling throughout the western states, taking pictures whenever he could find customers, but more often than not, taking pictures for the pure artistic enjoyment of it. He briefly established businesses in Virginia City, Nevada; Ruby City, Idaho; Helena, Montana; and Salt Lake City, Utah. During these travels he met and became acquainted with Mark Twain.

In 1871 he went to San Francisco where his mother, now widowed, was living. He worked for San Francisco's leading photographer, a man named Rulofson, until 1872 when he moved to San Luis Obispo. In 1874 he moved to Ventura where he opened a studio and art gallery in one of the adobe buildings which were part of the Mission Quadrangle. He married Mary O'Beria Sinclair in 1875. A son, Calvin Day, was born in 1877 and died in 1879. In 1880 a daughter, Pansy Augusta, was born. It was in 1880 also that he built a studio on Oak Street between Main and Santa Clara streets. The American Clothing Company, and now the Great Eastern Annex occupies the site where his studio once stood.

Mr. Brewster was an elder in the Presbyterian Church for many years and was also a school trustee. He had a fine bass voice and was a member of the church choir for at least thirty years, as well as being a member of a quartette which sang for nearly all funerals.

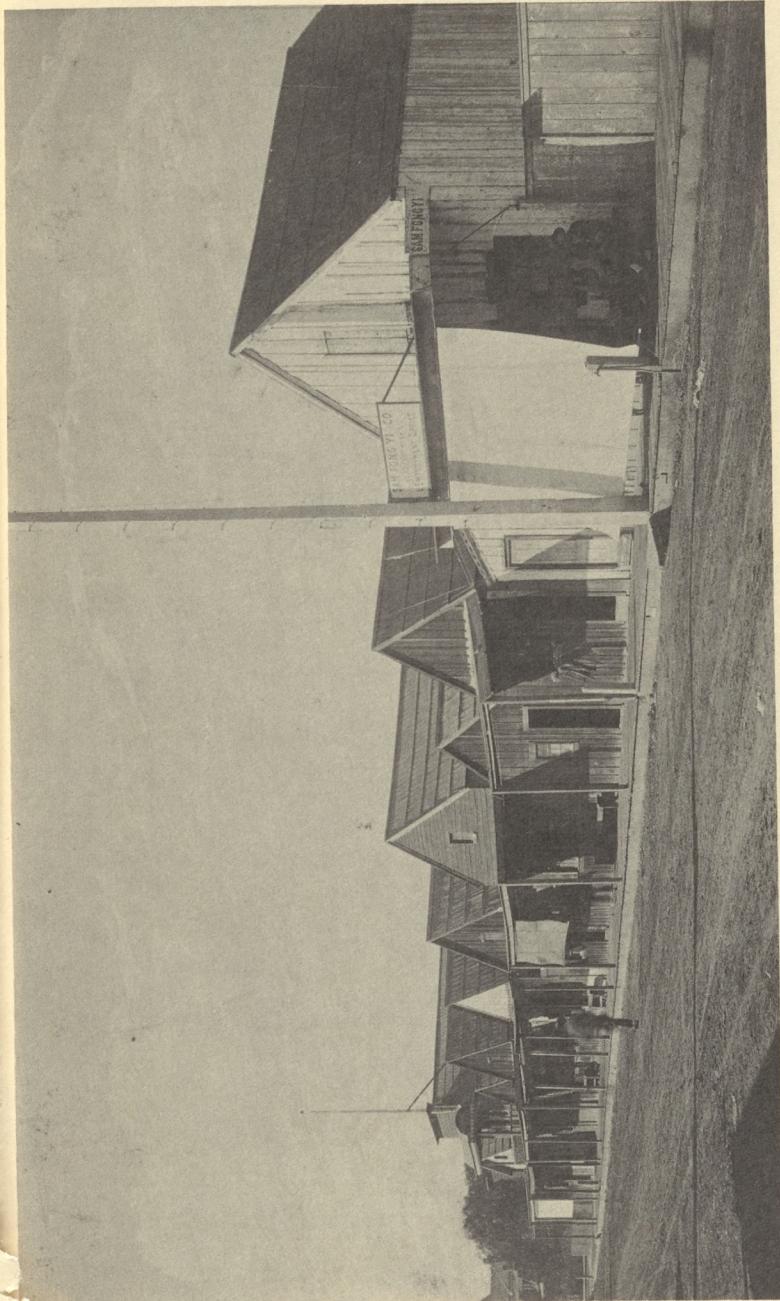
He was a great story teller, having a most active imagination, and he was able to conjure up the most fantastic tales with which to regale the youngsters who flocked around just to listen. Some of the older ones knew the stories were pure fiction, but loved to hear them just the same. There seemed to be a never ending continued story of "When I was Lion Hunting in Africa." This was a most unbelievable account of hostile savages, wild elephants, etc. The prize story was of the lion who charged Calvin when he was fifty yards away from his gun. Bravely he stood his ground, and just as the lion was upon him, he thrust his arm down its throat, seized him by the tail and with a quick jerk turned him wrong side out! The lion ran off in the opposite direction!

Calvin Brewster was devoted to his profession, and photographed practically every resident, building, and locality in Ventura County. The Ventura County Pioneer Museum has hundreds of his pictures which are as sharp and clear today as they were eighty years ago. Judge Drapeau has a photograph of his mother taken by J. C. Brewster in Virginia City about 1871. He also photographed many of the early California Missions, and these pictures may be found in museums throughout the state. He was probably more interested in the artistic than in the financial side of his profession. However, when he died February 24, 1909, he left a wealth of pictorial history of Ventura County and its residents.

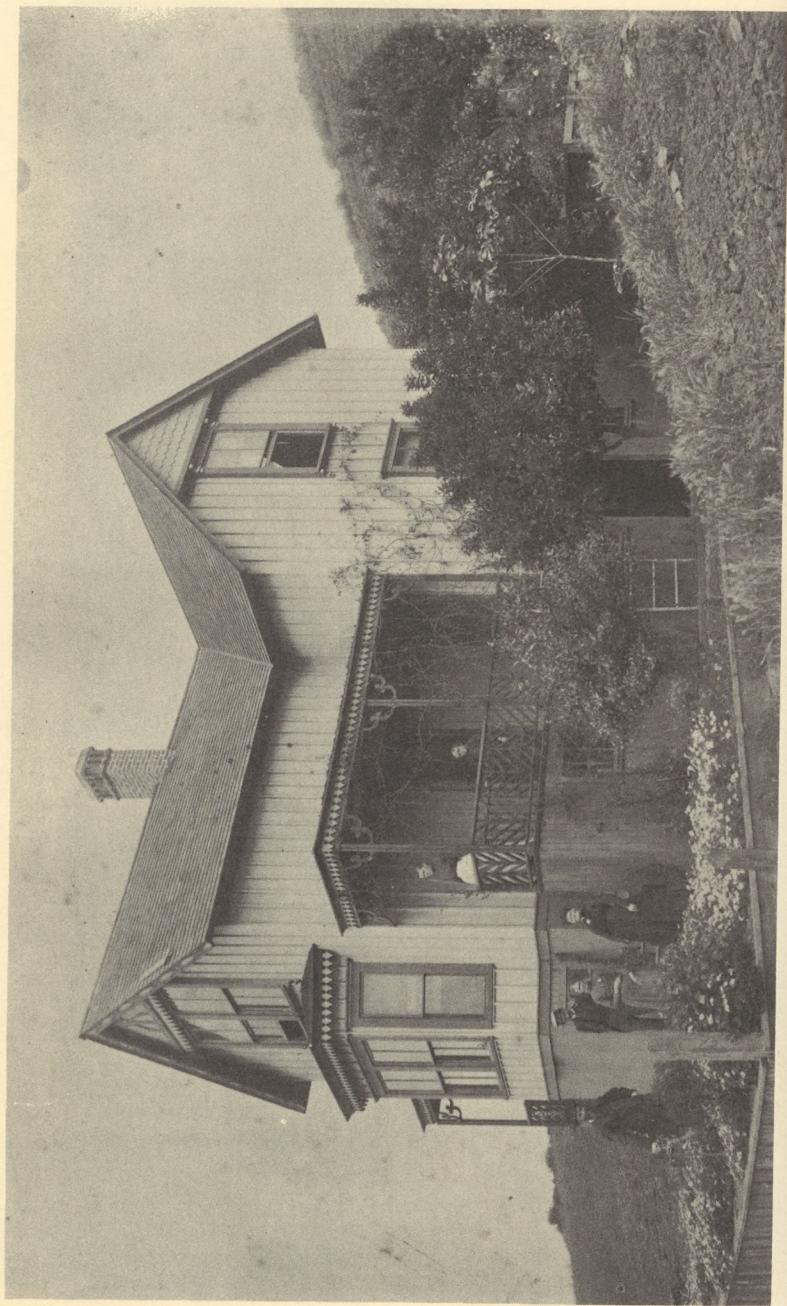


Main Street, Ventura, 1896

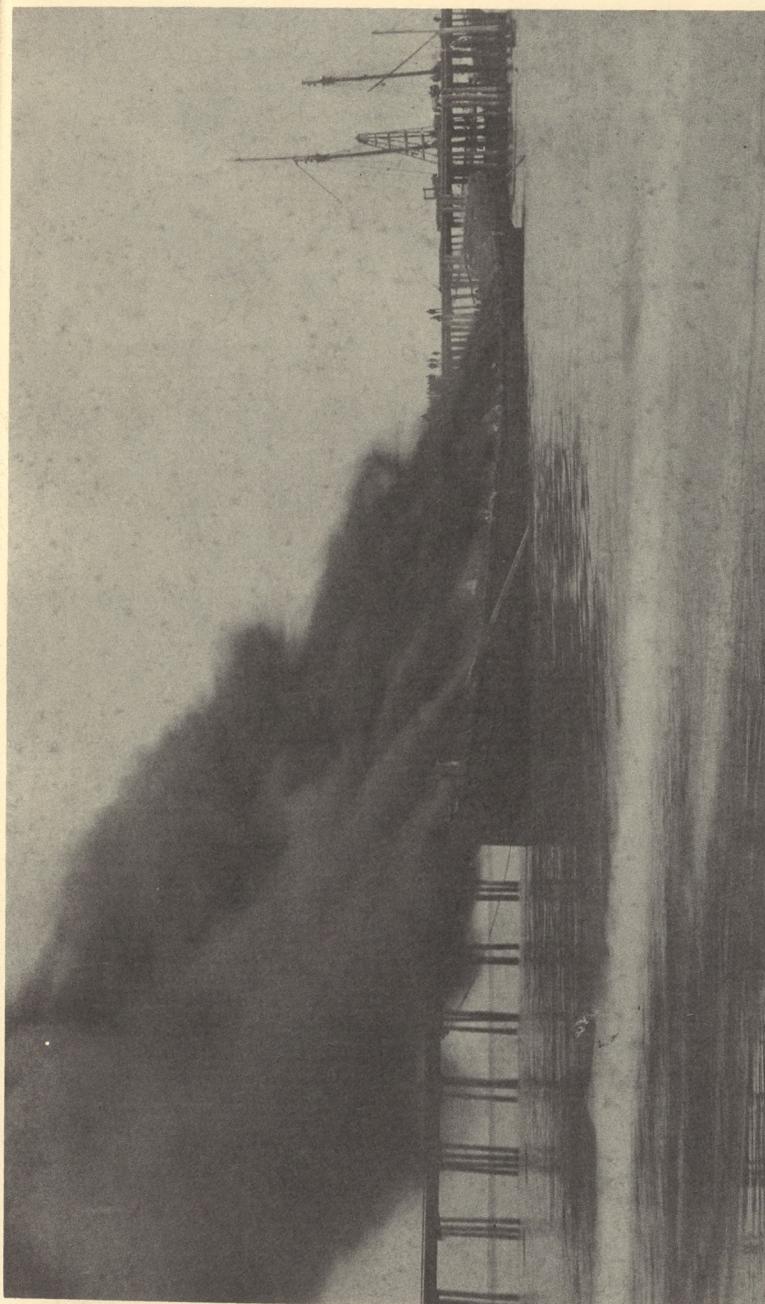
Main Street, Ventura, 1896



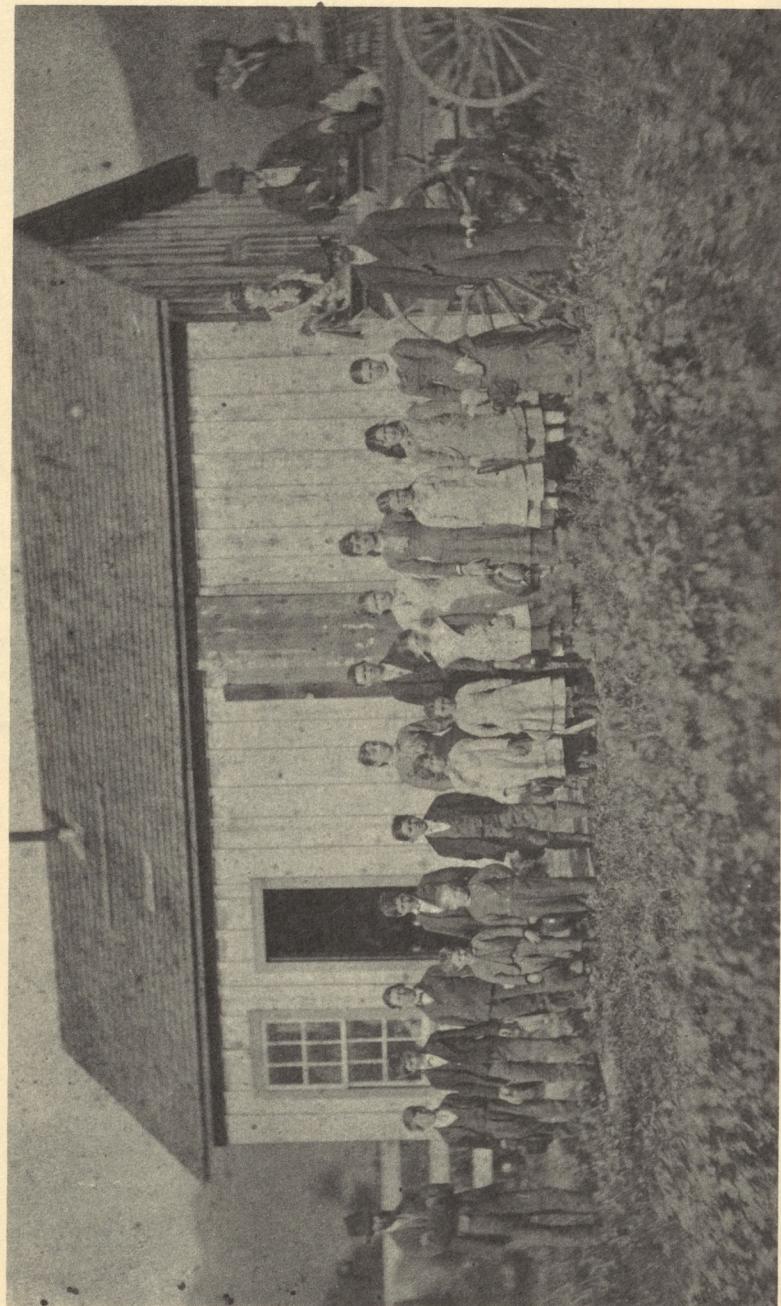
Ventura's Chinatown, 1896. Figueroa Street between Main and  
Santa Clara Street



Home of Irving Barnard, Ventura

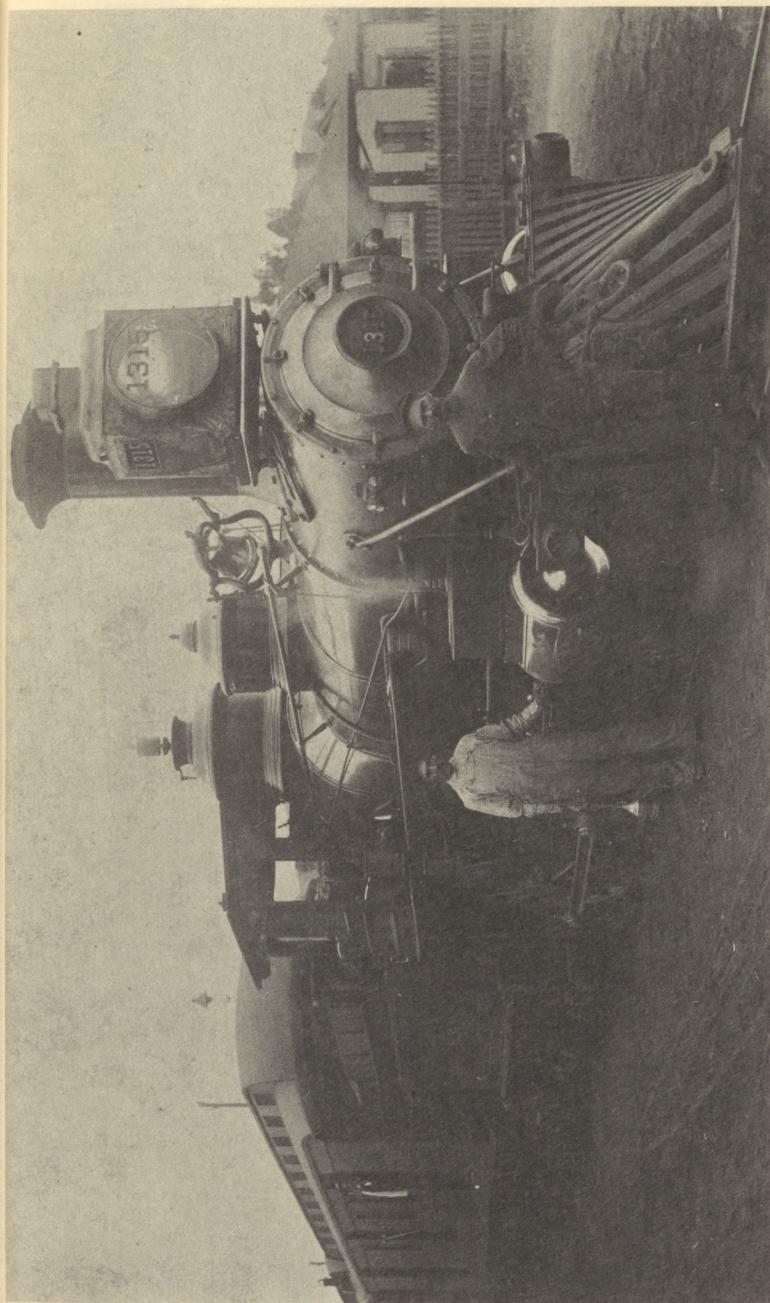


Steamship *W. L. Hardison* destroyed by fire while loading for her  
Initial trip, 1889

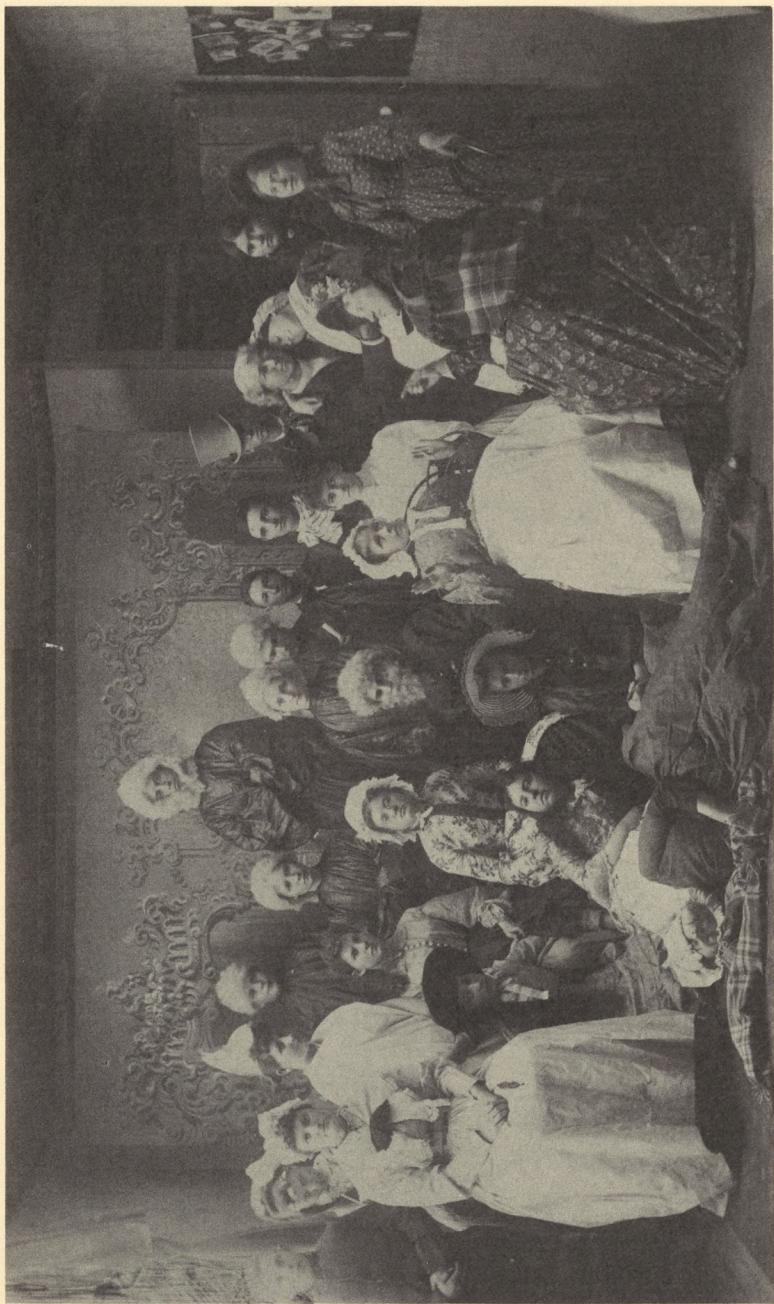


Ventura's first school, corner of Ventura Avenue and Harrison, circa 1875

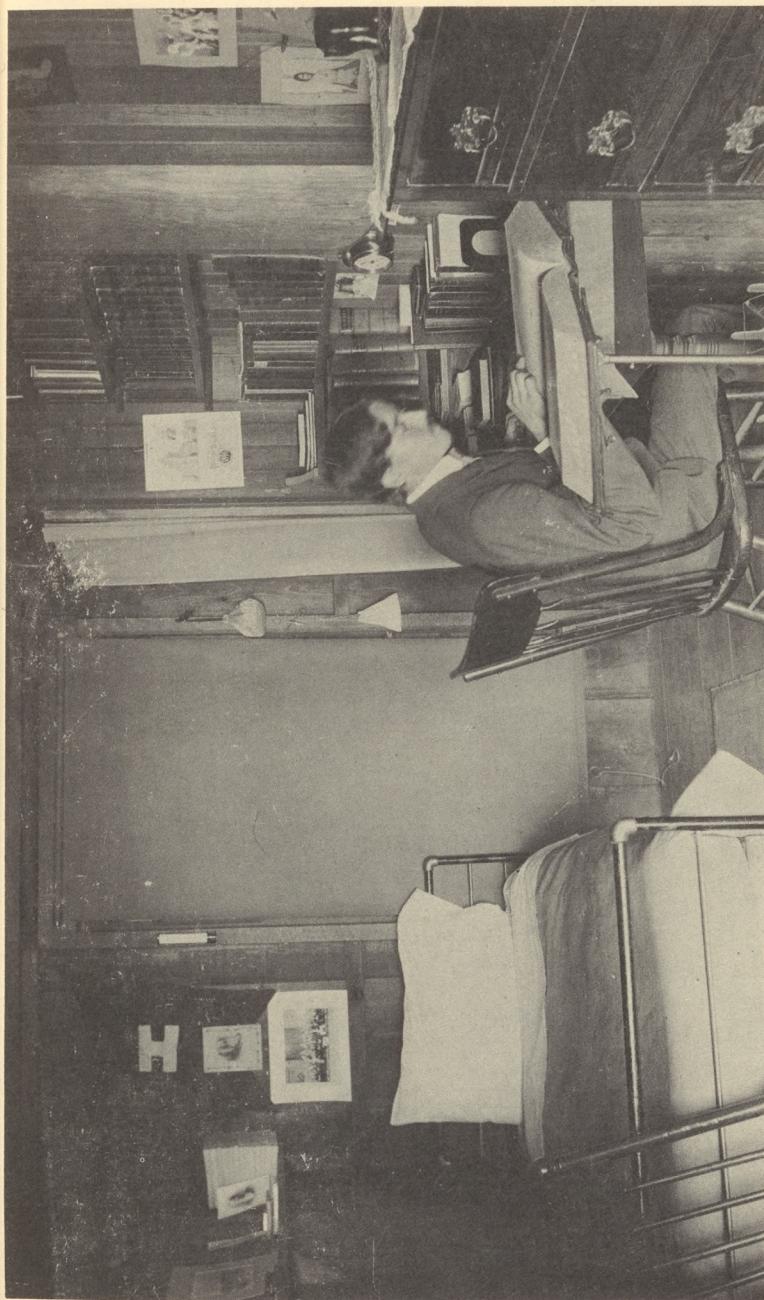
Ventura's first school, corner of Ventura Avenue and Harrison, circa 1875



Southern Pacific Depot scene, 1895, Ventura



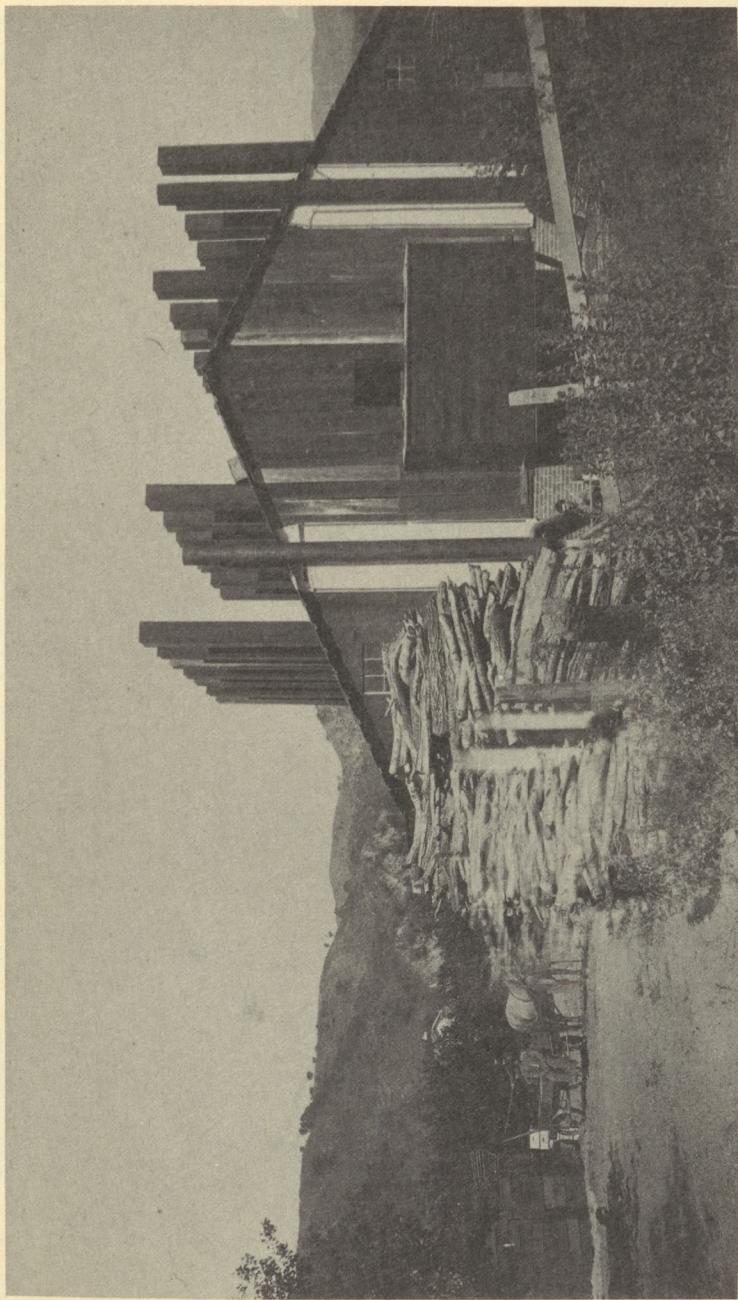
Ventura High School students dress as Dickens' Characters



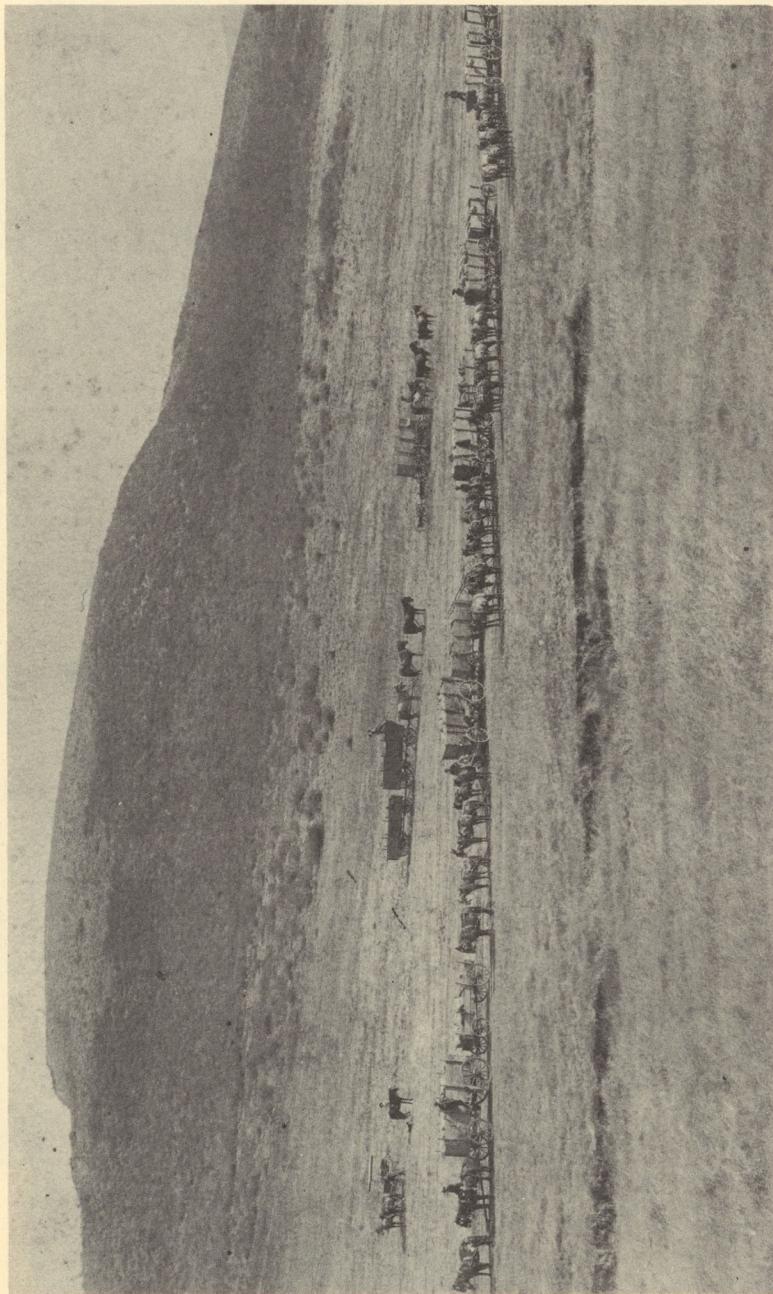
Student's room at Thacher School, 1899



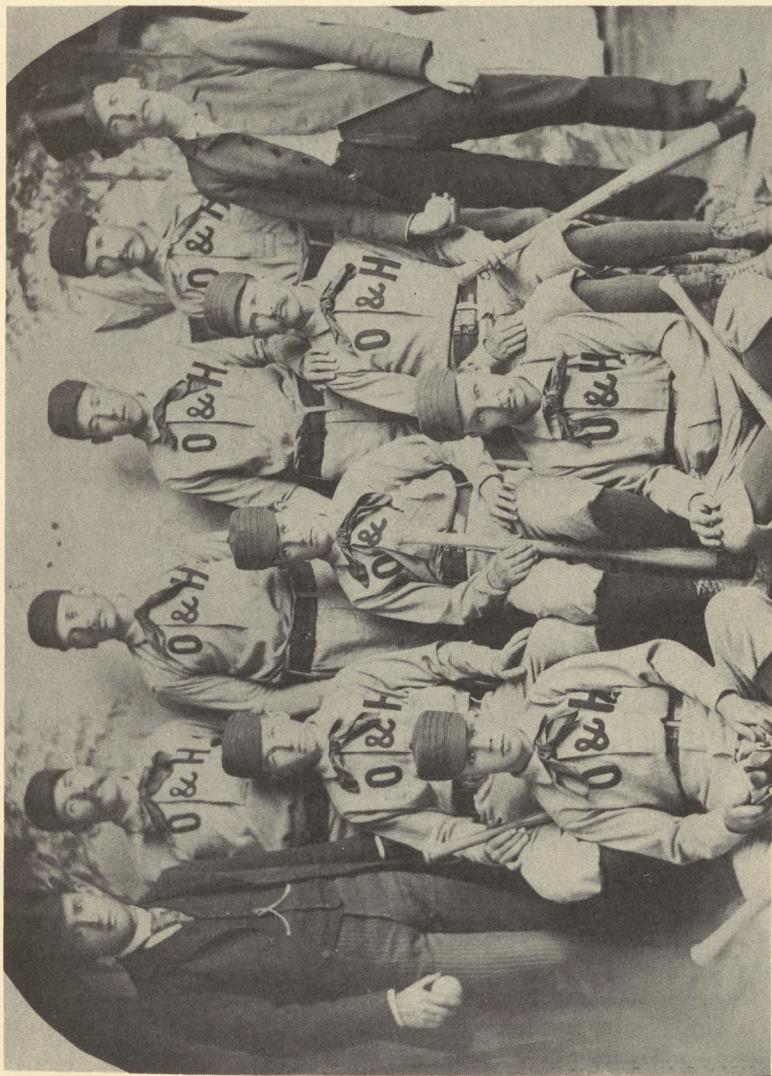
A classical Brewster family portraiture, the M.D.L. Todd family, circa 1885



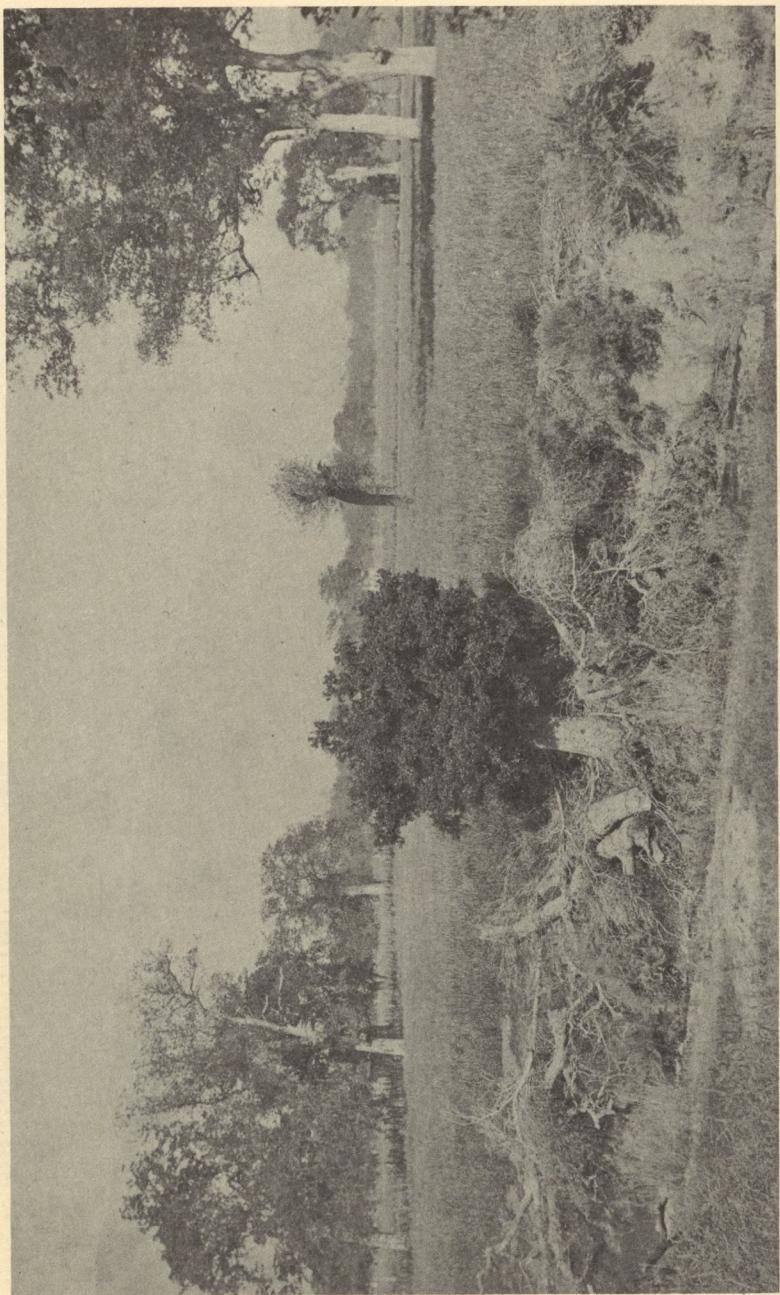
Ventura Avenue apricot drier, 1890. Henry Sparks sitting on truck. Top of old flour mill visible directly above Sparks.



Hauling grain in the Simi



Ord and Haselton Baseball Team, Santa Paula, 1887



Oiai Valley. 1874.



San Nicholas Island, scene of the rescue of the "Lost Woman"

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## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

*Peoples Lumber Co.* This firm was organized in 1890 by a host of Ventura County pioneers. It has served the construction needs of its founders, their descendants, and countless thousands of newcomers.

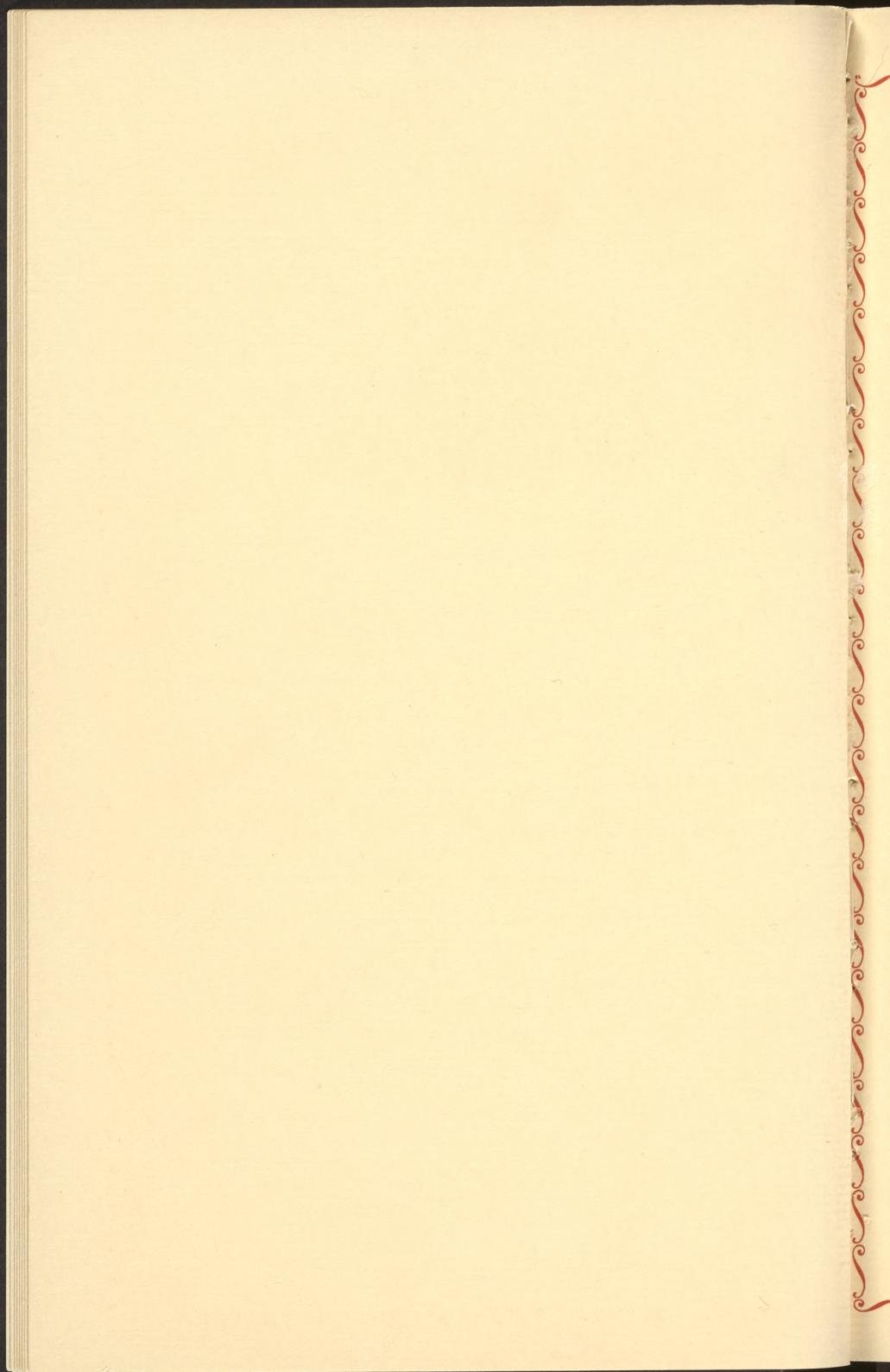
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

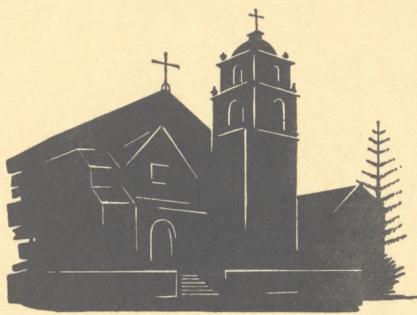
*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.

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VENTURA  
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HISTORICAL  
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QUARTERLY

August 1962

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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VOL. VII, No. 4

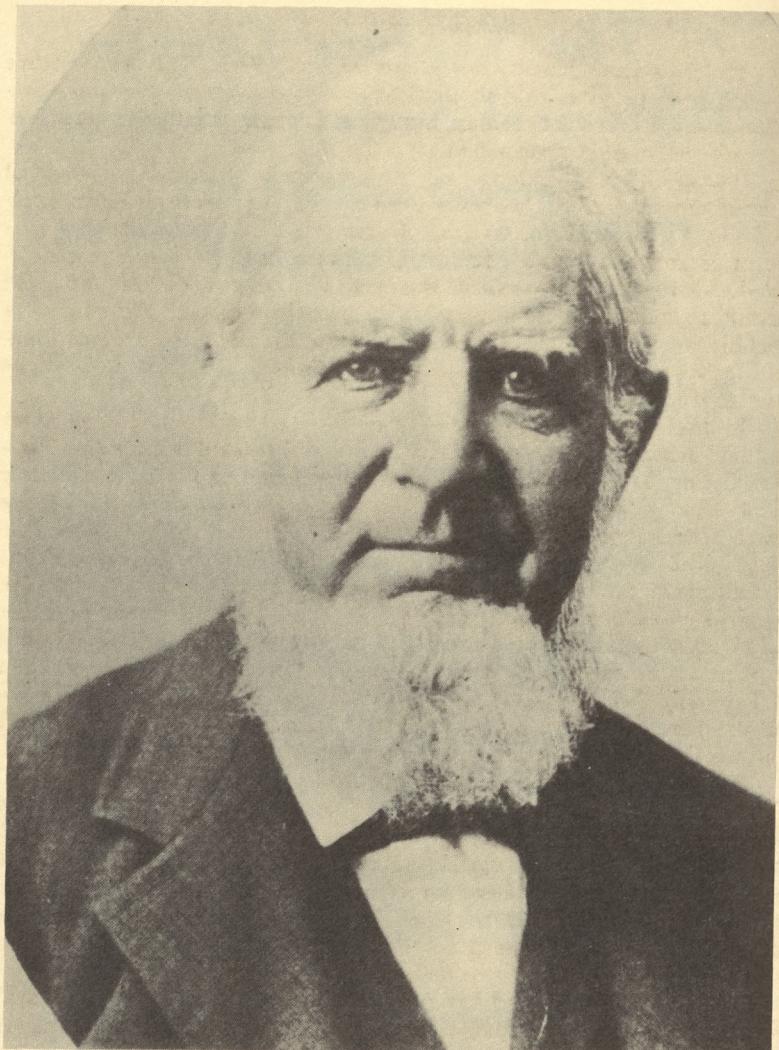
AUGUST, 1962

C O N T E N T S

*Formation of Ventura County*

*Board of Commissioners*

*Organic Act of Ventura County*



Sherlock Bristol  
President of Board of Commissioners

## *The Formation of Ventura County*

By J. H. MORRISON

We who have never known our section other than as Ventura County, perhaps give little thought to the events, or what is more important, to the forward-looking men who brought about the establishment of our county government.

It was no small undertaking for a sparsely settled and somewhat isolated district but our pioneers were no different from those in other sections of California in wanting Home Rule, and they had the precedent established by the state of California itself to justify their demand. Our state government was set up, officers elected, and the legislature held its first session, nine months before California was officially admitted to the Union. Our senators and congressional representatives were in Washington, D.C. months before being seated as members of the Congress.

In the formation of counties, twenty-seven of them, on February 8, 1850, what is now Ventura County was included with Santa Barbara County as Township No. 1; and it so remained for approximately twenty-three years. Until 1850, all counties were administered by the Court of Sessions (consisting of the County Judge and two Associate Judges who were Justices of the Peace.) In 1855 the Supreme Court of California decided that this court was given jurisdiction only in criminal cases, and so could not act in county management or other purely civil matters. The Legislature then established by law a Board of Supervisors for each county. Fernando Tico was the first resident of Township No. 1 to serve as supervisor and was followed by Ysidro Obiols, Jose de Arnaz, Juan Camarillo, Juan Rodriguez, and in 1867 Thomas R. Bard became the first non-Spanish member of the board.

In 1869 Mr. Bard was not a candidate for re-election, Dr. C. W. Thacker being elected as his successor. Apparently, Thacker failed to qualify so Mr. Bard remained on the board until November 12, 1872, when thinking his term expired, he resigned, leaving Township No. 1 without representation. Realizing his mistake, Mr. Bard endeavored to reclaim his seat in February, 1873 (prior to Ventura County's first election) but was challenged by James Daly who had been elected at a special election in which he defeated Reverend Sherlock Bristol. The two members of the board from Santa Barbara, John Edwards and T. Wallace More, diplomatically settled the argument by adjourning to such a time as would leave the affairs in both counties in a condition admitting of no uncertainty.

With the end of the Civil War and because of the decline in placer mining, immigrants and former miners looked to central and southern California for homes and lands. Because of its somewhat isolated setting, the Ventura district had been slow in growth, but those who

had seen it were impressed by its apparent fertility and the low price of lands. In the 1860 election some 400 votes were cast in the three Townships of Santa Barbara County. By 1868 the voting population had practically doubled; and in the first Ventura County election, February 25, 1873, 608 votes were cast in the new county.

Thus by 1868 residents of the Ventura district were talking of separation, and in 1870 the Escandon Bill for forming Ventura County was presented to the Legislature. The move was opposed by the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, including Thomas R. Bard; but the opposition was largely based on the language and content of the bill rather than on the matter of separation. Everyone realized that separation was inevitable; but Escandon in his enthusiasm and because of poor advice, asked for too much, consequently the bill was defeated. However, the residents of Township No. 1 were not discouraged; and when the 1872 Legislature convened, William Dewey Hobson was sent to Sacramento to—we may as well say it—lobby a carefully drawn Bill of Separation through the Assembly and Senate. This bill had the backing of practically all the influential citizens in both Santa Barbara and Ventura districts, was passed by both Houses and signed into law by Governor Newton Booth on March 22, 1872, to be effective as of January 1, 1873. Quite a victory for a comparatively small district with a total population of some 3500, a thousand of them living in and around the town of San Buenaventura.

A notable contributor to victory was John H. Bradley, who on April 21, 1871 issued the first number of the *Ventura Signal*. Mr. Bradley had opposed the Escandon Bill, but battled 24 hours a day for the 1872 version. Mr. Bradley, grandfather of Santa Paula's Percy Strickland, lived to see the successful conclusion of his campaign, but died a few months after the county became a reality.

California owes much to such pioneer editors who, with an old flat-bed hand press, a pocketful of type, and usually no money, established newspapers in small towns like San Buenaventura.

Lately, there has been much more or less loose talk about moving the Courthouse offices to a new location. There have also been press statements that the Act of 1872 did not specifically name Ventura as County Seat. To settle that question; Section 3 of the Act states that, "The Seat of Justice shall be in the Town of San Buenaventura until otherwise changed by law."

You may be wondering where this somewhat lengthy preamble covering happenings of nearly a hundred years past, leads; so now we will try to get to the meat in the coconut.

On March 22, 1962 a resolution congratulating the county of Ventura on having reached its 90th anniversary was introduced in the State Senate by Senator Robert Lagomarsino. This resolution was, of course, unanimously adopted by the Senate, as was a concurrent resolution in the Assembly.

Now it is quite true that the Act of Separation was adopted by both legislative bodies and signed by Governor Newton Booth on March 22, 1872. However, the Act provided that it would not be effective until January 1, 1873; and it was not until January 2, 1873 that the Governor appointed a five man commission as "A Board of Commissioners to Perfect the Organization of the County of Ventura." Booth appointed Thomas R. Bard, Reverend Sherlock Bristol, Dr. Charles W. Thacker, William de Forrest Richards, and Angel G. Escandon. Escandon represented the town of San Buenaventura and the predominant Spanish speaking residents of the district, while the other four, all large land-holders, represented the agricultural, oil, and cattle interests.

Pursuant to a call by Thomas R. Bard, the Commissioners held their first meeting at Spear's Hall in the town of San Buenaventura on the 13th day of January, 1873. Having been sworn into office, the Board proceeded with organization, electing Sherlock Bristol as President and Thomas R. Bard as Clerk.

It is probable that the Commissioners had met prior to official notice of appointment to prepare an agenda so that no time would be lost following organization. The county boundaries were a part of the Act, and were practically the same as those that exist today.

The first day's business included division of the new county into three supervisorial districts, whose boundaries were to be the same as those of the three townships, namely: Ventura, Saticoy, and Hueneme. The Board then set up eight election precincts: Ventura, La Canyada (including Ojai) Mountain View, Sespe, Saticoy (including Santa Paula) Pleasant Valley, San Pedro, and Hueneme.

The following morning was taken up with some minor changes in township boundaries, and in naming election officers for each of the eight precincts. In the afternoon an election proclamation was presented calling for an election to be held on February 20th, for the purpose of electing a District Attorney, School Superintendent, Sheriff, Assessor, Treasurer, Coroner, two Constables, two Justices of the Peace, and one Supervisor for each district. It was assumed that the Constable and Justice of the Peace holding office under Santa Barbara County would continue in office until the end of their terms as officials in Township No. 1, hence the election call for peace officers in only two Townships.

The County Act contained a provision allowing the representative of Township No. 1 on the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to hold office as a Supervisor of Ventura County for the balance of his original term. James Daly had been elected as successor to Thomas R. Bard, but had failed to file his certificate of election within the prescribed time limit, although he had sworn to its correctness before a deputy county clerk located at Ventura. Mr. Bard suggested, apparently for the record rather than because he wanted to continue in office, that because of Daly's failure to qualify he (Bard) was the only

duly elected and qualified Supervisor, and as such should serve until his successor was officially elected and qualified. Bard made no campaign for the office and Daly was chosen at the election on February 25, 1873, together with J. A. Conaway (Santa Paula) and Dr. C. W. Thacker (Hueneme.) Three years later Bard and Daly were fellow members of the Board and did much for early Ventura County.

The Board had appointed itself to act as a county clerk in preparing for the coming election and to provide a Great Register of Township No. 1 voters. However, the question of the legality arose, so the Clerk was instructed to telegraph the Attorney General at Sacramento for an opinion. Mr. Bard telegraphed Attorney General John L. Lowe as follows: "Is Ventura now a county *de facto*? Have Commissioners authority to perform duties of County Clerk in registration of Voters? Board cannot agree."

Attorney General Lowe replied, "Ventura is not a county until county officers are elected and qualified."

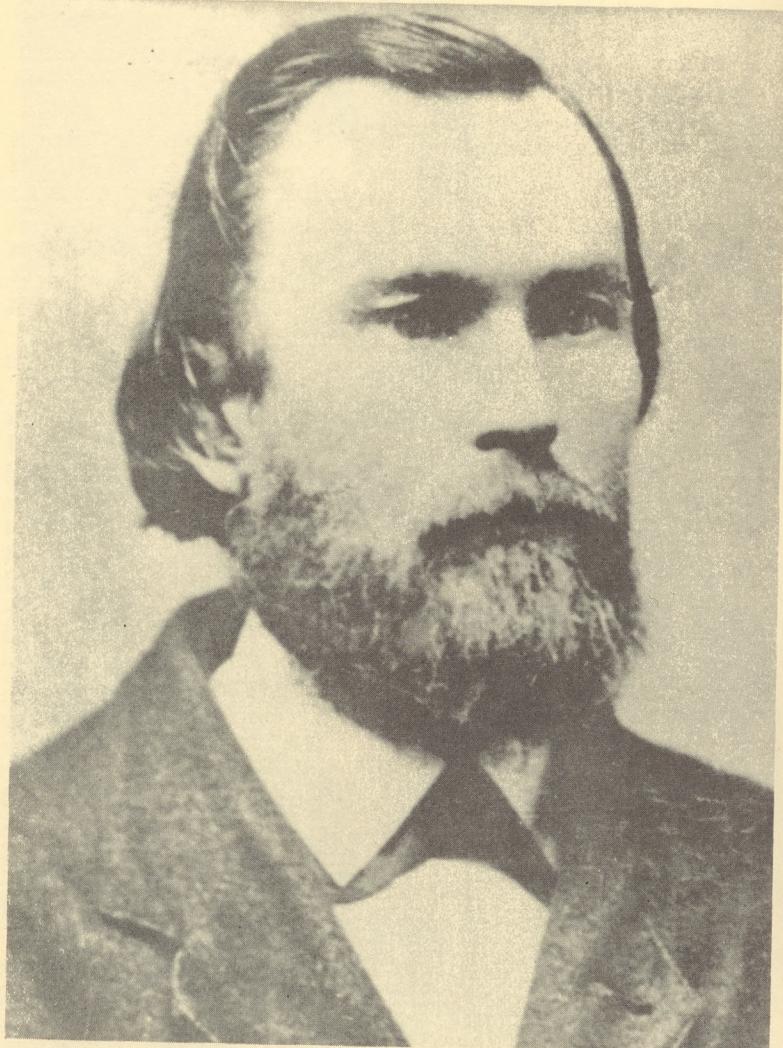
All of which threw the fat into the fire. The Board rescinded the several election orders already issued, moved the date of election from February 20 to February 25, and decided to ask the officials of Santa Barbara County for assistance. The Santa Barbara officers were a bit dubious as to the legality of the request, but the County Clerk agreed to furnish a sufficient number of certified copies of the Great Register for use at the approaching election, and to appoint three deputies, one from each proposed Township, to act for him in the registration of electors of Santa Barbara County residing in the territory set aside to form Ventura County. All of this was carried out and the election was duly held on February 25, 1873.

Communication was somewhat slow in those days, so it was not until March 10 that the Commissioners canvassed the returns and certified to their correctness. Dr. Cephas L. Bard (Coroner) was the lone Republican winner; the other fifteen offices went to Democrats. The Commission met for the last time on March 12 when, having accomplished its purpose, the meeting was adjourned *sine die*; and Ventura County was established as a political entity. Almost a year had passed since Governor Booth signed the Enabling Act. The legal mills ground slowly in 1872, as they do today.

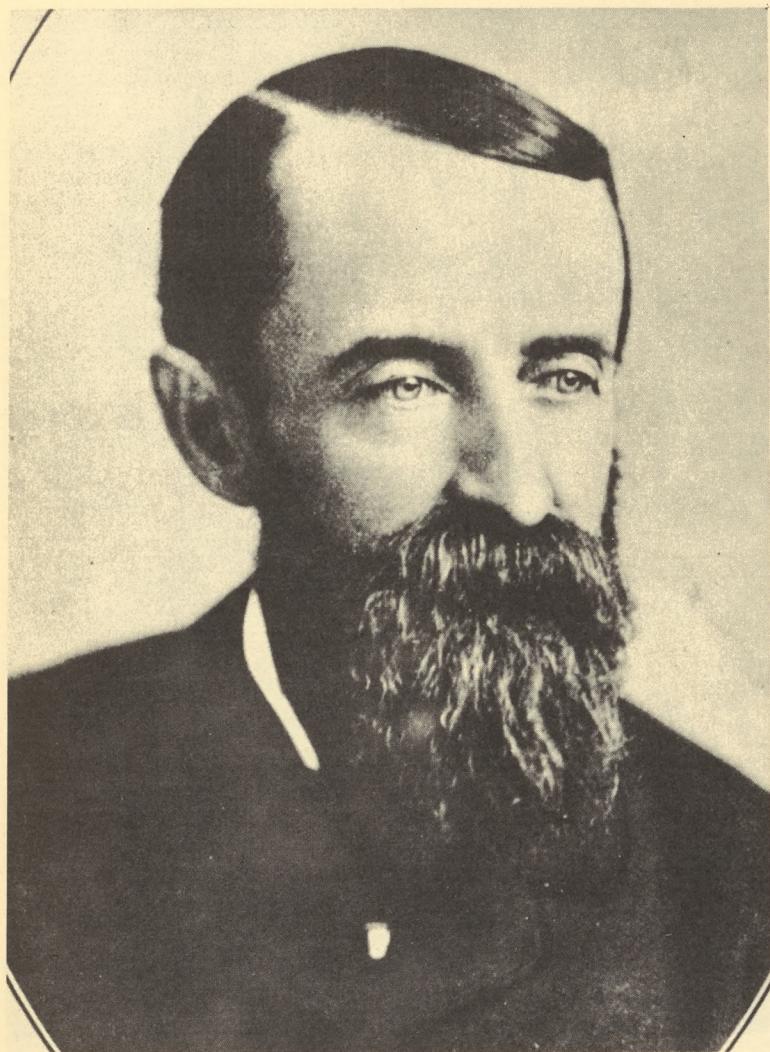
If we want to be very exact, our county will celebrate its centennial on March 10, 1973; but most of us are no doubt willing to accept January 1 as the date of our institution as a county. Anyway, we oldsters will leave the 1973 commemoration in the hands of the younger pioneers. We might add that at the January 1874 election, all previously elected officers except Treasurer E. A. Edwards, and Dr. Bard, were defeated for re-election. It is said that Edwards, a hardware dealer, was elected Treasurer because he had the only fire and burglar resistant safe in Ventura County in which to store the expected wealth of the new county!



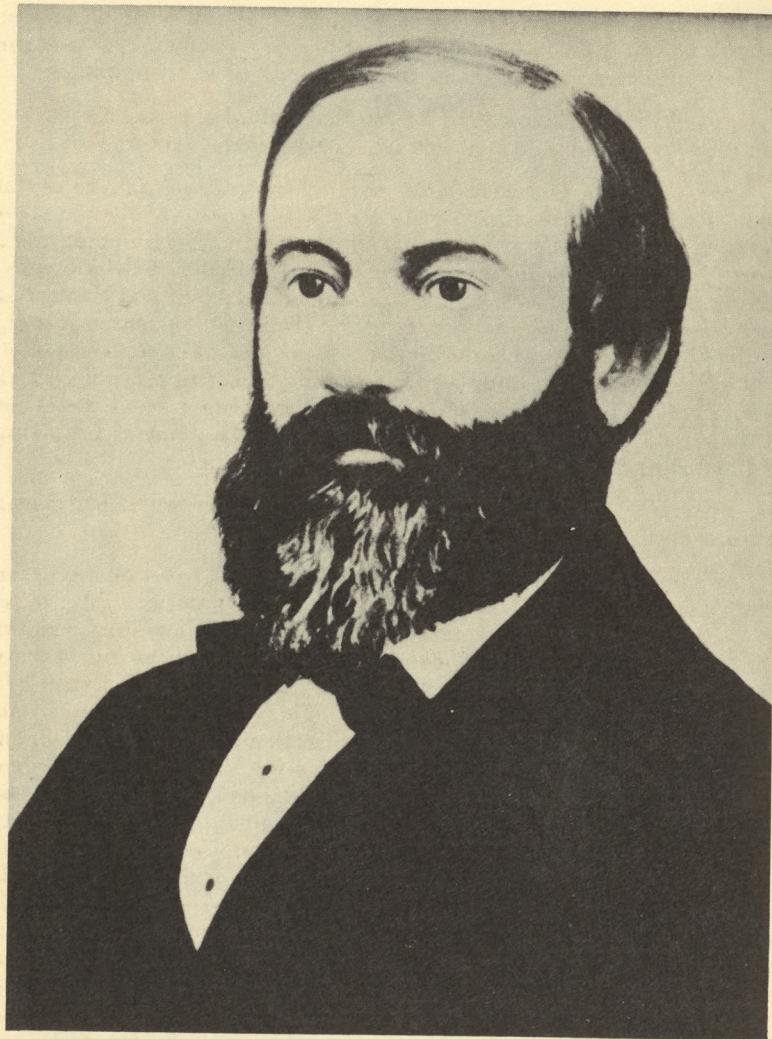
Thomas R. Bard



Dr. Charles W. Thacker



William de Forrest Richards



Angel G. Escandon

## *Organic Act of Ventura County*

An Act to create the County of Ventura, to establish the boundaries thereof, and to provide for its organization. The people of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. There shall be formed out of the eastern part of Santa Barbara county, a new county, to be called "Ventura."

SECTION 2. The boundaries of Ventura county shall be as follows: Commencing on the coast of the Pacific ocean, at the mouth of the Rincon Creek; thence following up the centre of said creek to its source; thence due north to the boundary line of Santa Barbara county; thence in an easterly direction, along said boundary line of Santa Barbara county to the northeast corner of the same; thence southerly along the line between the said Santa Barbara county and Los Angeles county to the Pacific ocean, and three miles therein; thence in a north-westerly direction to a point due south of three miles distant from the center of the mouth of Rincon creek; thence north to the point of beginning, and including the islands of Anacapa and San Nicholas.

SECTION 3. The seat of justice shall be at the town of San Buenaventura until otherwise provided by law.

SECTION 4. The Governor of this State shall, when this Act takes effect, appoint some suitable person resident of Ventura county, to act as County Judge of said county, whose term of office shall continue until the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, and until his successor is elected and qualified, and who shall hold his office and reside at the county seat. There shall be chosen by the qualified electors thereof, at the Judicial election to be held in 1873, and every four years thereafter, a County Judge for Ventura County, whose term of office shall commence on the first Monday of January succeeding his election and continue for the term of four years. Said County Judge of Ventura county shall receive a salary of one thousand dollars per annum, to be paid quarterly; said County Judge shall hold the Courts required by law to be held by County Judges. There shall be three regular terms of the County Court held in each year, said terms to commence on the first Mondays in February, June and October; provided, however, the County Judge may call and hold special terms of the Probate Court whenever public necessity may require. Said County Judge shall discharge all the duties required by law of County Judges in this State.

SECTION 5. There shall be an election held in the county of Ventura within sixty days from the time of the first meeting of the Commissioners. There shall be chosen at said election by the qualified electors of said county, one District Attorney, one County Clerk, who

shall be ex-officio Auditor, Recorder and Clerk of the County Probate and District Courts; one County Superintendent of Public Schools; one Sheriff, who shall be ex-officio County Tax Collector; one County Assessor; one County Treasurer; one County Surveyor, who shall be ex-officio Public Administrator. Said county officers shall hold their respective offices until the first Monday in March, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy-four, and until their successors are elected and qualified. There shall be elected, chosen by the qualified electors thereof, one Supervisor for each Supervisor District in said county, who shall hold their offices as follows: District Number one, until the first day of January, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy-three, District Number Two until the first day of January A.D. eighteen hundred and Seventy-four; and District Number Three, until the first day of January, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy-five. Provided, that all Supervisors duly elected and qualified Supervisors of Santa Barbara county, residents of Ventura county, shall hold their office for the term provided by law, upon having duly qualified as township officers of Ventura County. There shall be chosen at said election, by the qualified electors, thereof, two constables and two Justices of the Peace for each township, provided, however, that all constables and Justices elected at the general and judicial elections in the year A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy-one, residents of Ventura county, shall hold their office for the time provided by law, upon having duly qualified as township officers of Ventura county for their respective townships in which they reside, as said are organized by the action of the Board of Commissioners provided by this Act. The term of office of the Justices of the Peace and constables of Ventura county shall be the same as in other counties of this State.

SECTION 6. The Governor shall, when this Act takes effect, appoint five persons, residents of the proposed county, who shall be and constitute a Board of Commissioners to perfect the organization of the said county of Ventura—a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum. Said Commissioners shall meet in the town of San Buenaventura within twenty days after their appointment, and after being duly sworn to faithfully discharge their duties, as prescribed by this Act, shall organize by electing from their number a President and Clerk. They shall then divide said county into three townships, define their boundaries, and designate the name of each. They shall also divide said county by townships into three Supervisor Districts, and number the same. They shall also establish election precincts, and appoint one inspector and two judges of election for each precinct in said county. They shall give thirty days notice by proclamation in some newspaper published in the county, or if there be no newspaper published in Ventura county, then said publication to be made in some newspaper published in the county of Santa Barbara, of the officers to be elected, the precincts established and the officers of election of each; they shall also designate

the boundaries of each district, with their names or numbers; also the bounds of and numbers of each Supervisor District. Said Commissioners shall on the second Monday after said election, meet at the county seat as a Board of Canvassers, and proceed to canvass the election returns. Said Commissioners, their President and Clerk, are hereby authorized and required to discharge the same duties as are now required by law of Boards of Supervisors and County Clerks in the counties of this State, so far as the same applies to holding elections, canvassing election returns, and issuing certificates of election. They shall keep full record of all their proceedings, and file the same, with the original election returns, in the county clerk's office as soon as he shall have been qualified, and thereupon the powers and duties of said Commissioners shall cease and terminate.

SECTION 7. It shall be the duty of the Board of Supervisors of Ventura county whose election is by this Act provided for, to meet at the county seat on the first Monday of the month subsequent to their election and qualification, and elect their member from District Number One chairman. They shall then allow such per diem and mileage to the commissioners and officers of election as they may think proper and just, and such allowances shall be paid by a warrant drawn in favor of each by the proper officers. Said Board, or a majority of them, shall then appoint two freeholders, residents of Ventura county, to act as a Board of Commissioners whose duty it shall be to meet a like number of commissioners appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara county, at a time and place agreed upon. Such joint commissioners shall then organize by appointing from their number a president and secretary, and shall immediately proceed to determine the indebtedness of said county at the time when this Act takes effect. After ascertaining the total indebtedness, they shall ascertain the total market value of the assets belonging to the county under consideration. They shall also ascertain the assessed value, under the assessment of eighteen hundred and seventy-one of the property in the territory hereby set apart to form Ventura county. Then, after deducting the total value of assets from the total amount of indebtedness, so as to ascertain the actual indebtedness, the proportion due from the county of Ventura shall be ascertained as follows: as the total assessed value of property in the territory taken from Santa Barbara county to form Ventura county is to the total assessed value of said county, so shall be the proportion of the actual indebtedness of Ventura county to Santa Barbara county; and when so ascertained, said commissioners shall certify to their respective Boards of Supervisors, such amount. The Board of Supervisors of Ventura county shall then cause to be issued the bonds of Ventura county, payable in five years from the organization of said county, to the county of Santa Barbara for such sum as the Commissioners certify to be due, bearing the same rate of interest as the county of Santa Barbara is now paying on such debt. Said Board of Supervi-

sors shall procure and provide a suitable place or places to be used as a courthouse and jail, and for the accommodation of various county officers. They shall then, in accordance with the general laws governing Boards of Supervisors, levy State and county taxes. Provided, that for the General Fund they shall have power to levy not exceeding eighty cents on each one hundred dollars of taxable property in said county. They shall also levy a tax of ten cents on each one hundred dollars of taxable property in said county, which shall be collected as other State and county taxes are collected; and when so collected the same shall be set apart, pro rata, as a sinking fund to liquidate the debt due from Ventura county to the county of Santa Barbara, effected by the creation of Ventura county. And when there shall be five hundred dollars or more placed to the credit of said county of Santa Barbara, it shall be the duty of the Board of Supervisors of Ventura county to draw upon their own order such sum, and purchase the warrant of said county of Santa Barbara, and upon presentation to the treasurer of the county of Santa Barbara he shall surrender a like amount of Ventura county bonds. Said bonds shall then be cancelled, and on their faces countersigned by the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and filed in the clerk's office. Said Board of Supervisors shall exercise such other powers and duties as are conferred by the general laws on Boards of Supervisors in the counties of this State. The levy of taxes for the first year shall be as effective as if levied at the time provided by the general law.

SECTION 8. All civil actions, or proceedings in the nature of actions, whether original or upon appeal, civil or criminal, which shall be pending in the District Court, County Court, or Probate Court, in the county of Santa Barbara, at the time of the organization of Ventura county, in which the defendants are residents of Ventura county, shall be removed for trial and final determination to the proper courts of Ventura county on motion of any party interested; provided that all actions commenced for the collection of taxes and licenses shall not be removed from the courts of Santa Barbara county. Provided further, that in all criminal causes where the offense was committed within the present limits of Ventura county, upon the application of the District Attorney of Ventura county, said causes shall be removed to Ventura county.

SECTION 9. All residents and property holders of the county of Ventura, upon application to the county recorder of the county of Santa Barbara, and upon payment of fees required by law, shall be entitled to receive a transcript of the record, duly attested, of any property situated in the county of Ventura and recorded in his office; and upon presentation of said transcript to the county recorder of Ventura county, and upon payment of the fees required by law, said county recorder shall record the same, and said record shall have the full force

and effect of the original record; provided, however, the Board of Supervisors of Ventura county shall, within two years, procure a suitable set of books, and make such arrangements as they may agree upon with the county recorder of Santa Barbara county, for transcribing therein all necessary records properly certified, said records to have the same effect and force of the original records. Provided, that the expense of such records shall not exceed the sum of four thousand dollars.

SECTION 10. The county of Ventura shall be attached to and form a part of the Third Senatorial District, and for judicial purposes, shall be attached to and form a part of the First Judicial District. The terms of the District Court shall be held in and for the county of Ventura on the first Monday in March, July and November of each year.

SECTION 11. The county officers of Ventura county shall, except as otherwise provided by this Act, be elected at the same time as county officers in other counties of this State, and shall hold their offices for the terms fixed by law. They shall give bonds for the faithful discharge of their duties, to be approved by the County Judge, in the following sums: Sheriff, in the sum of six thousand dollars; as ex-officio county tax collector, in the sum of fourteen thousand dollars; the county clerk and ex-officio the recorder and Auditor, in the sum of five thousand dollars; the assessor, in the sum of five thousand dollars; the county treasurer in the sum of twenty thousand dollars; the county surveyor, in the sum of two thousand dollars; the county coroner and ex-officio public administrator, in the sum of five thousand dollars. The Supervisors of Ventura county shall provide for the election of their successors, whose term of office shall be three years.

SECTION 12. All officers provided for by this Act shall perform such duties as are required by the general laws of the State, unless otherwise provided by this Act.

SECTION 13. The Supervisors of Ventura county shall receive for their services four dollars per day, and twenty-five cents per mile in coming to the county seat; provided, that for the years eighteen hundred and seventy-three, and every year thereafter, the mileage of any one Supervisor shall not exceed the sum of two hundred dollars.

SECTION 14. The officers of Ventura county shall receive the following salaries and fees: The treasurer shall receive per annum the sum of six hundred dollars; the assessor shall receive per annum the sum of six hundred dollars; the district attorney the sum of five hundred dollars; the superintendent of public schools the sum of three hundred dollars. The fees of all other officers shall be the same as provided for in "An Act to regulate fees of office," approved March 5th, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy, for similar officers in the county of Santa Barbara.

SECTION 15. Ventura county shall be entitled to five Notaries Public, as provided by law.

SECTION 16. The superintendent of public schools of the county of Santa Barbara shall furnish the superintendent of public schools of Ventura county a certified copy of the last census list of the different school districts in the territory set apart to form Ventura county, and shall draw his warrant on the treasurer of Santa Barbara county in favor of the superintendent of schools of Ventura county for all money that is or may be due, by apportionment or otherwise, to the different school districts of Ventura county.

SECTION 17. All delinquent taxes due the county of Santa Barbara at the time this Act takes effect, from the persons or property in Ventura county shall be paid to and collected by the proper officer of Ventura county, and the auditor of Santa Barbara county shall certify such delinquent taxes and tax list in duplicate to the collector and auditor, respectively, of Ventura county. They shall be collected by the officers of Ventura county in the same manner as delinquent taxes are collected in the other counties of the State.

SECTION 18. The Supervisors may issue Ventura county bonds in a sum not to exceed in the aggregate twenty thousand dollars, bearing interest not to exceed ten per cent per annum, payable in ten years from the date of their issuance; the principal and interest of said bonds to be paid in gold coin of the United States; and may negotiate the same to provide a cash fund to be used in the payment of the first expenses of the county and the salaries of its officers. After the issuance of said bonds, no debt shall be created by the county of Ventura in excess of the amount of money in the treasury of said county.

SECTION 19. All Acts, and parts of Acts, so far as they conflict with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed.

SECTION 20. This Act shall take effect and be in force from and after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and seventy-three.

Approved March 22, 1872

NEWTON BOOTH, *Governor*

T. B. Shannon, Speaker of the  
Assembly

J. T. Farley, President pro tem  
of the Senate

## *Membership*

### **LIFE**

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard

### **SUSTAINING**

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

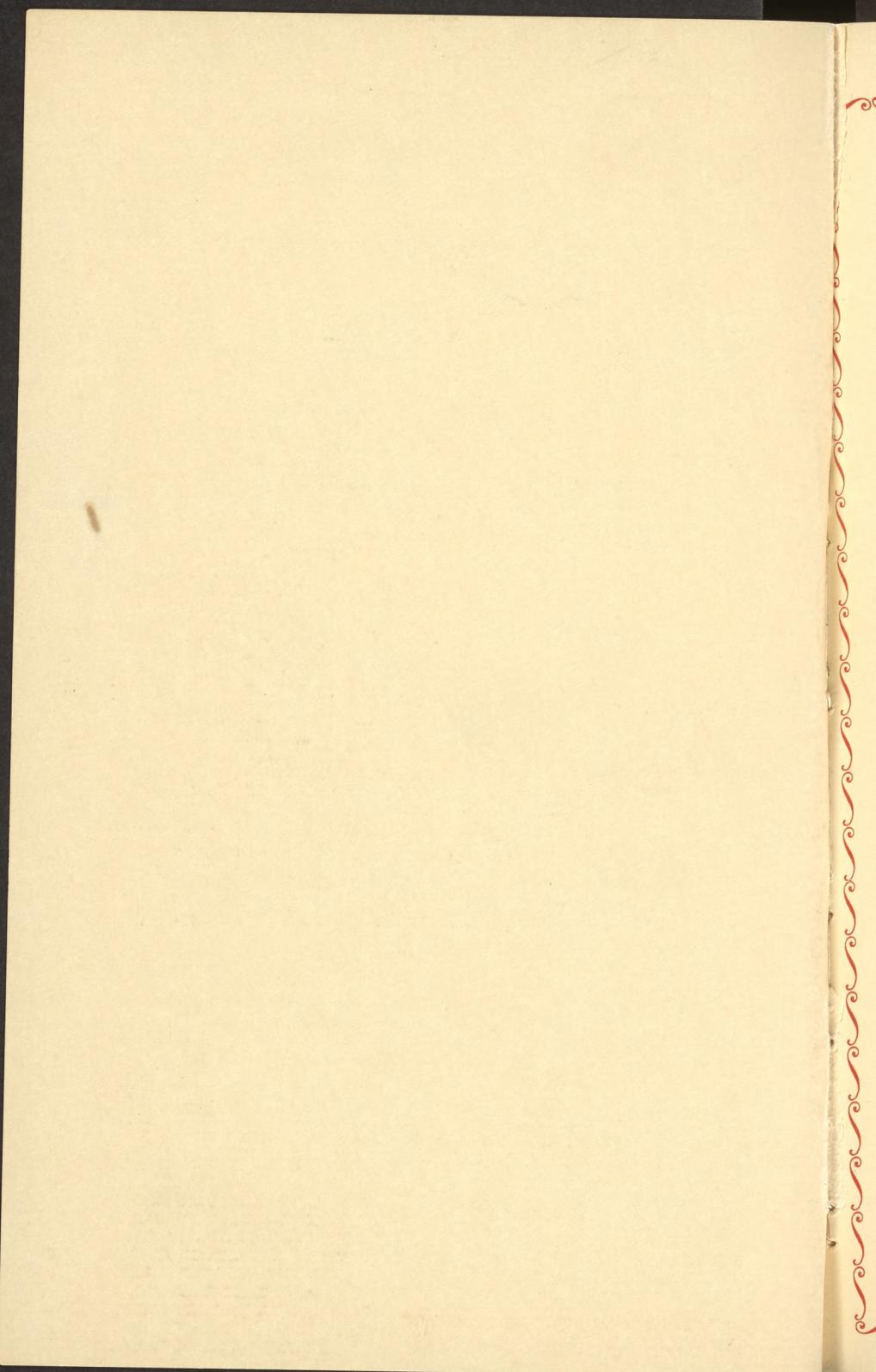
*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

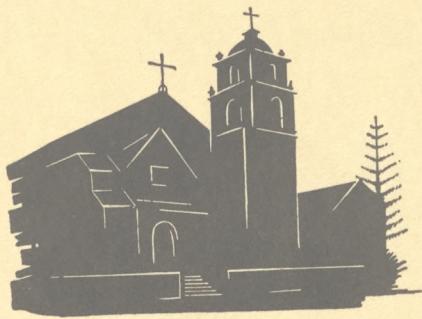
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

*Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

November 1962

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

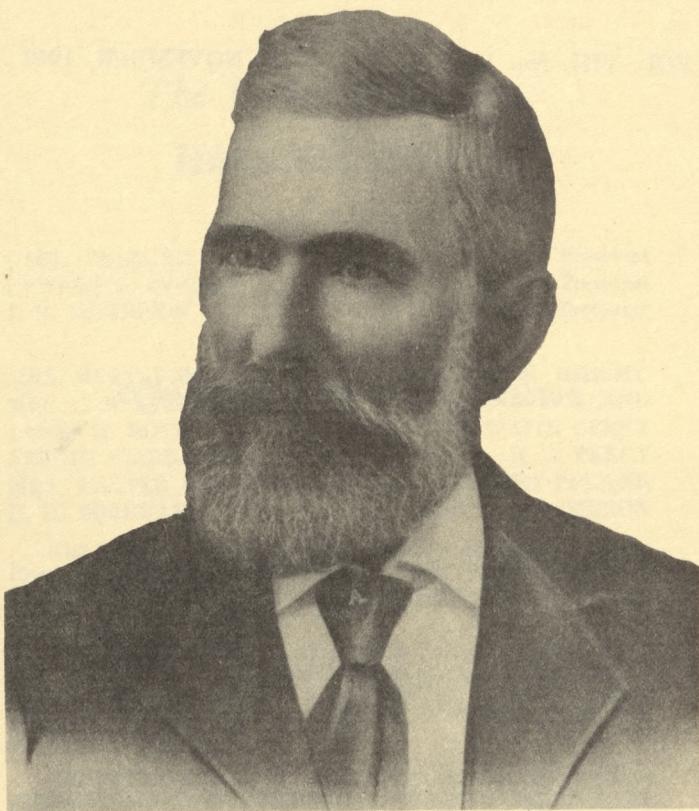
The Ventura County  
Historical Society Quarterly

VOL. VIII, No. 1

NOVEMBER, 1962

C O N T E N T S

*Tales of Early Sespe Days*



Ari Hopper

## *Tales of Early Sespe Days*

By HARRY KENNNEY

My father came to California in 1869, settling first in Santa Barbara. He was interested in bees and kept increasing his holdings until he had quite a little apiary, about thirty colonies in all. There was a standard hive at that time, but my father put his bees in the new Langstroff hive and was looking for a larger place to try and get more honey. In 1873 he took one colony of bees and came to the Sespe and put it down on what is known as the Hardison Ranch and left it there for a year. He came back in 1874 to see how the bees were doing and found the hive was full of honey, so he concluded that he would move to the Sespe. Mr. Kenney was the first man that ever raised bees commercially in Ventura County.

The Sespe land grant was originally taken out by Don Carlos Carrillo of Santa Barbara soon after Mexico won independence from Spain. It was described as in the Santa Clara Valley, the original place being approximately where the Sespe River ran into the Santa Clara. The ranch house was right across the south side of the river. After Carrillo's death the Sespe was purchased by the More brothers, the dominant personality being Thomas Wallace More.

The land was never actually surveyed until along in the 1860's when the government started to sectionalize the land of California. Prior to that time More claimed that he owned all the land from Santa Paula Creek to the Camulos, and from hilltop to hilltop. His grant called for six leagues of land, but the Mexican grant was supposed to be for only two. It was discovered that somebody had taken white ink and put it over the 2 and made a 6 on it. My father always said that he was sure that More was the man responsible for the forgery.

There were little parcels of land all around the grant that did not belong to him, and that is where More got into trouble. He did not want anyone to settle in the area, but along in the 1870's people began to come in and pick out these lands around the edge of the grant.

Three or four years ago I was at a banquet, and the speaker told about More and what a great empire builder he was. He was not an empire builder at all, because of all the men in California in the days of Thomas Wallace More there was not any man that was more despised than he.

More had gone into the sheep business after the dry year of 1864. 1877 was another dry year, and in those days they did not lamb until the spring of the year. Of course when they came to lamb in the spring of 1877 the ewes were on nothing but dry feed, and they deserted their lambs. My father said he could start down across the country with a wagon, and there would be a thousand lambs following him that their mothers had deserted.

Whenever there was anybody away from home, More would have his herders drive his sheep in on their crop and eat it up. He tried that on my dad one day, but my dad caught More's herder driving the sheep up and worked him over. Then More came tearing over and wanted to know why he had kicked his herder. My father told him if he would just get off from the horse he would give him some of the same. He did not get off!

In those early days Ventura County was a part of Santa Barbara County. More would sue somebody for something, some infraction of the law; and then he would subpoena everybody, all the men in the area, and force them to go to Santa Barbara for the trial. Of course it would take three or four days to go up there and attend the trial; and while they were gone, More would have his herders drive his sheep on these people's crops and eat them up.

There is no use for me to tell anything about More's murder. That has been talked over and is ancient history now. More was mean; and a posse of men went out, set fire to his barn, and when he ran out to save his stock they shot him by the light of the fire. Every man between Santa Paula and Piru was arrested for that murder except my father and Mat Atmore. I never found out until quite recently why they were not into it. It was evidently because my father and Mat Atmore told these men they knew what was going on. When they were approached about it, they told them to let the law take its course and not to go into mob violence. That is the reason they were never arrested, although I think my father and Mat both knew what was going to happen.

At the trial, when one of the men turned state's evidence against Frank Sprague, there were ten or a dozen men there. None of them swore any differently because they would be implicated, too. Sprague was convicted, but later on he was turned loose. My father always claimed that he did not think that Sprague did the act, because Sprague was never known to carry a gun of any kind or even how to shoot one.

When my father moved up to the Sespe, he went down to a place called the Orchard Ranch, near Saticoy, and bought all kinds of grapes and fruit trees, including two or three lemon trees, two or three orange trees, and set them out. We had irrigating water from Lord creek, and they did very well.

In those early days my father made a barrel of wine out of muscat grapes that was pretty stout stuff. The Sespe Land and Water Company was figuring on buying some of this land, and one day McNab and Bates and some of the boys came over to my father's house to see if citrus would grow in the valley. Father gave them a good glass of wine when they came. They looked at the land and at the trees, and when they went away he gave them another glass. Before they got back to Fillmore, some of them were in the bottom of the rig. They had thought it nice sweet wine, but they were not used to it. It was about



Thomas Wallace More

25% alcohol. One of the men said to the driver after he got back to Fillmore, "Do you suppose that old gink over there fortified that wine with alcohol?"

In those early days nobody knew what kind of fruit trees to plant. My father tried sixteen kinds of grapes and about ten varieties of apples and eight or ten kinds of peaches. Of course some of them did well and some did not. The muscats were about the only grapes that were any good.

Along in the early 80's Mat Atmore and a man by the name of Pyle, and Barnes Chormicle, put in a ditch down near the mouth of the Sespe River and led it out of what was called fish slough. They took the water clear down to what is known now as the Chormicle Ranch, just along the grant line. Later, the Sespe Ranch concluded they wanted part of that water to use on citrus, so they traded some land for half interest in the water. Mr. Atmore got about thirty acres of land above the ditch, and Mr. Pyle got a little. Barnes Chormicle did not want any land; all he wanted was money, so they bought him out. In a few years he did not have any land or money either, but Atmore and Pyle

still have that land given them in exchange for a half interest in their water rights. It is all set out to citrus now, just as good as there is in the country.

Law enforcement in those early days was a good deal different than it is now. When the sheriff went out after a man and told him to halt, if he did not halt the sheriff halted him right there—funeral. In 1875 the railroad was being built from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and they had their headquarters at the time in Bakersfield. They were going over the Tehachapi Mountains and had to have more horses. There were a couple of fellows got an idea in their heads that they would come down to Ventura County and pick up some horses.

Everybody around Sespe had two or three head that they turned out, and whenever they wanted them to make crop they would gather them up and work them. These Bakersfield fellows thought that here was the place to fill the need of the Southern Pacific. So they established kind of a horse market in Bakersfield and came down through the mountains to the Santa Clara Valley. There was an old trail that went through there; I have been over it several times since. They called it the "Horse Thief Trail." It turned off about Gorman Station and came down east of the Piru River and out about where Fillmore is now. It skirted around the mountain and came to a place about a half a mile from the road on what is now known as the old Leavens and Goodenough place. The Bakersfield boys made their "headquarters" there.

Just about dark one night they were hiding in the brush getting ready to go down to this ranch and stay all night. They always stayed there at night; and the next day they would go out and round up a bunch of horses, catch them, and start for Bakersfield with them that night. They always traveled on a moonlit night. On this particular evening a man happened to be passing along the road and spied these fellows, and he went on down to Santa Paula and telegraphed to the sheriff in Ventura. The sheriff came out that night and picked up two other men in Sespe to help him. He gave them double barreled shot-guns and loads of buckshot, and they went up there to get the horse thieves.

They stopped up the road about a quarter of a mile from the ranch house, and the sheriff went to the door and knocked. He sent the two deputies back to the barn to catch the fellows if they ran out the back way. The sheriff asked if these two men were there, and the man that lived in the house said no that they were not there and they had not been there. The old man was stalling for time to let the men get away, and the sheriff was stalling to let them get out of the house, also. They got out, but neither of them reached the barn. The two deputies were stretched out there in the darkness behind some old gang plows, and when the thieves ran for the barn they downed them both.

Of course that was before my time, but my father told be about it when I happened to see some graves just east of Goodenough's place.

They had buried them right along the road. They never had any more trouble with horse thieves in this part of Ventura County.

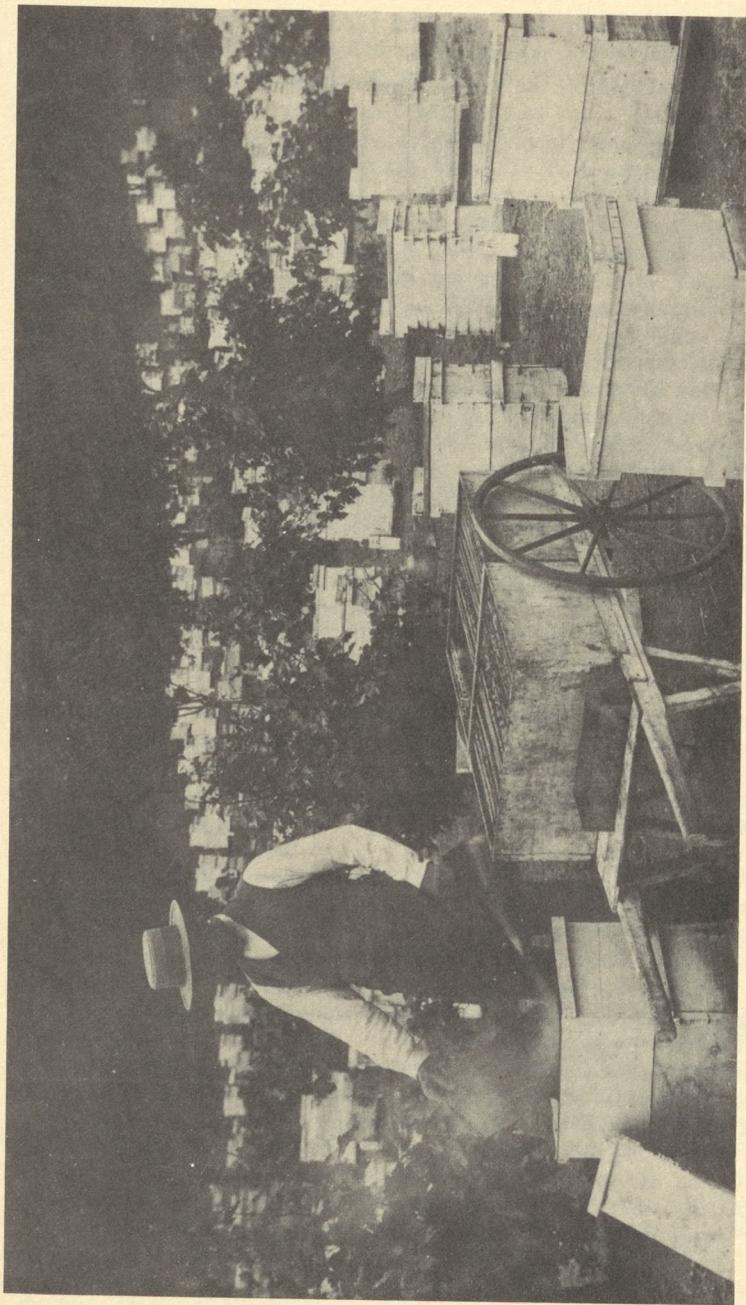
There was another bunch of fellows came in that got to robbing stages. The stage came through the Santa Clara Valley about twice a week, and every once in awhile there would be a stage robbery. There was nearly always money aboard that came from San Francisco. In those days there were no banks here, and money was shipped in by stagecoach in what they called express boxes.

On one of these trips a man robbed the stage right next to the Sespe Ranch house. They caught him up near Newhall, but he did not have any of the money with him. He had gotten away with \$16,000, but they could not find the money so they shot him. Before he died, he said that he had buried the loot beside an oak tree near the mouth of the Sespe River. Of course there were lots of oak trees around that country, and up until 1910 it was nothing to go out on a Monday morning and find a tree that had been dug around. People were still hunting for that money. I have learned since that there was an Indian that was wise to the thing, and he got the money long years ago.

A year or so later there was another fellow robbed the stage down east of the Atmore Ranch. The old road used to cross the river there where it was all grown up to willows. He went down there, and when the stage came along he held it up and got the money. In those days when anybody did anything like that the farmers and everybody took out their guns and went looking for him. They kept so hot on this fellow's trail that he could not get out of the valley. They kept him trapped for three or four days, but they just could not apprehend him. He would hide out in the daytime and try to ride out at night, but he did not know any way out of the valley except down through Santa Paula or up past Newhall. He might have gone out through Grimes Canyon if he had known the way, but he was a stranger in the country and knew nothing about it.

A couple of men riding along the road east of Piru saw horse tracks leading off into a bunch of willows, so they tied up their horses and went in to see if there was a man in there. They crawled through the weeds and found a horse tied up, and going further they found their man asleep. They jumped onto him, tied him, and then called the sheriff. He told them if they had not caught him sleeping they would never have taken him alive.

Returning the prisoner to Ventura, the sheriff and his posse stopped in Santa Paula to eat supper, but the prisoner said that he wasn't hungry. The sheriff took him upstairs and put him in a room of the hotel with handcuffs on and then went down to eat. When they came to get him, the man was gone. He had climbed out the window and dropped down to the street. The posse could not find him, and they made a big to-do about him getting away. The next morning they went looking for him and finally found the handcuffs hanging up in the willows, but they never looked any farther. That was part of the



Early Sespe Apiary

game. They never intended to take him; they just let him go and a citizen went out and caught him and hung him. That is all there was to it. No fuss about it at all. Everyone knew what had become of him, but they never found him! That broke up stagecoach robbing in Ventura County.

The Fourth of July was always a big event in the early days. Nearly every year they had a big picnic and barbecue in what was called "Kenney's Grove." My father never owned it, but a lot of people today think that he did. But my father always went to those who did own it and got permission to have the celebration there. My father and Mat Atmore always did all the preliminary work: hauled the water, fixed up the grounds, and put in seats for the picnic. Ari Hopper was always the man to tend to the big barbecue. He dug a big pit and roasted the meat on top. They did not cut it up into small chunks but into pieces about forty pounds. A big fire was built in the pit and kept going for about twelve hours. When the fire went down, they put the meat over the coals and roasted it. Old Ari tended to that. I tell you that was about the best meat that I ever ate.

Old Ari was one of those loud talking old fellows, and when he got about two drinks of whiskey in him he sure could yell. He talked loud all the time, but at these picnics they used to get him to get up just to see how loud he could yell.

Ari lived with his wife in Hopper Canyon, in fact the canyon is named for him. Whenever they wanted any meat, there was plenty of deer in the country. The old lady would take a gun and go sit out on the ridge, and pretty soon a deer would come along. That is the way they got their meat. One day Ari was out without a gun, and a bear got after him and ran him up a tree. He got out on a limb, but the bear kept coming closer and closer, and the limb was getting smaller and smaller. Ari claimed the bear was so close he could feel his breath on his face, so he just opened his mouth and yelled as loud as he could. The old bear got disgusted and turned away and left him alone.

He was telling some friends about it a few days later, and all the boys doubted his word; so Ari agreed to show them the tree and just how it had happened. He climbed the tree and got out on the limb, the same one he and the bear had supposedly both been on, but he got out a little too far and the limb broke. One of the fellows said, "My God Ari, I thought you said you and the bear was both on that yesterday." And Ari replied, "By golly, I was awful light yesterday!"

I believe it was about 1889 that they had a big Fourth of July celebration in Kenney's Grove. A special train came from Ventura and stopped right down south of the grove and let the people off. There was quite a parade and procession from Fillmore. They had a boat mounted on a wagon and had been celebrating before they left Fillmore that morning. A toy cannon was mounted on the boat, and they were shooting it as they came. It was a breech loader and had brass shells loaded with blanks. I guess the fellows shooting it were drinking

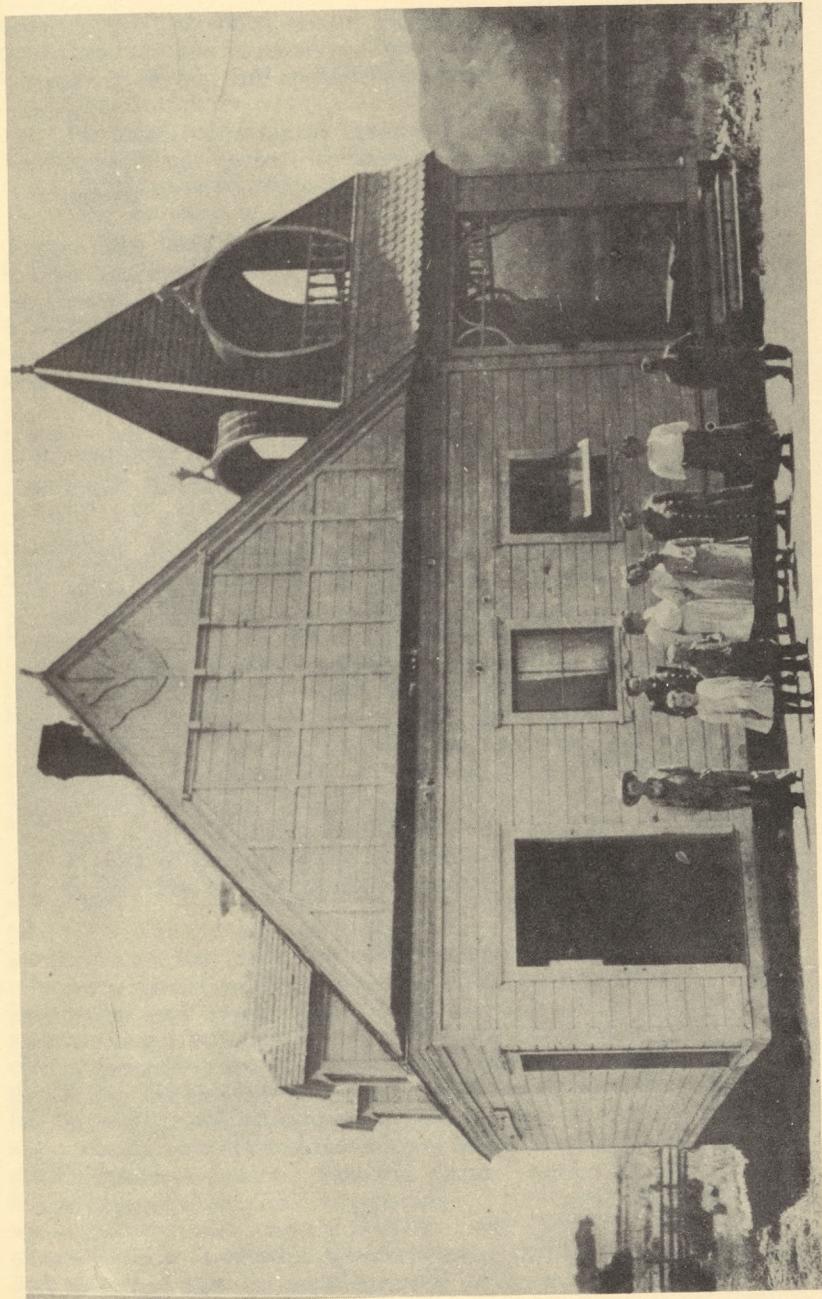
a little too much because a shell got stuck, and they could not get it in the gun. Bradfield (killer of Joe Dye) took a little horseshoe hammer and tried to tap in the shell. He accidentally hit the cap, and it exploded against his hand. They took him right over to Dr. Hinkley, who dressed him up. Bradfield lost three fingers, but anyway they had a big celebration and parade; and Ari Hopper barbecued five beef for the crowd.

In those early days there was a man by the name of Nick Covarrubias running for sheriff of Ventura County on the Democratic ticket. He was not well known in the eastern part of the county, and so he went up to see Ari Hopper. Ari knew everybody and everybody knew him. He was a Democrat and a Baptist, and there were quite a few Baptists around in that part of the country in those days. Nick got all the information he wanted and started to leave, but Ari said, "I guess I'll go along with you." Covarrubias was telling my father about it afterwards and laughing. He really did not want Ari to go with him. In those days the Republicans running for office always passed around the cigars, and the Democrats always carried a bottle of whiskey on their hips. Nick knew that Ari liked a sip pretty well, and it would not be long before he would be more harm than good. But he said he did not want to insult him, so he took him along. When they started out Ari told him, he said, "Nick when I get out of the buggy and walk up to a man and call him *Mister* Jones or *Mister* Brown or *Mister* Peterson or like that, just keep the bottle dark; but when I get out of the buggy and grab a man by the hand and give him a good hard shake and call him *Brother*, haul out the bottle!"

Poor old Ari, as much of a hunter as he was, he accidentally dropped a gun that struck the hammer in a slat of his cart and killed him almost instantly.

About 1882 there was only one school district in the area, and that was up near the Conaway place; they called it the Cienega School. In 1884 when the river got up so high and they could not cross for so long, they divided the district up and finally abandoned the Cienga Schoolhouse and formed a district over on the south side of the river. That was Willowgrove School. Then they had another district up towards Piru called Buckhorn, and another was out at what they called West Sespe. A school building was built there nearly half a mile above the Sespe railroad crossing along the bank of the river. That is where I went to school when I was a boy. To get across the Sespe River, we rode horses; and any of the kids that did not have a horse to ride, we would ferry them across the river to the schoolhouse and take them back in the afternoon.

When I went to school there, one of the great things we did at noon was to go rat hunting. There were lots of wood rats that built big nests out of sticks out in the cactus, and we used to get a long pole



Cienega School

about eight feet long and go out there at noon and poke those old nests and run the rats out. Then we would run around and see who could spear him with his pole. Of course the fellow that got the rat was the hero.

One day we got to chasing rats and forgot what time it was, and we went off so far we did not get back until nearly one-thirty. We all had to stay after school, and the teacher would not let us go rat hunting anymore for a month.

Soon after the railroad came through and a little town started at Fillmore, they divided that district up. Fillmore had one schoolhouse, there was another up Sespe Avenue, and one over near where the old Sespe depot used to be. They called that San Cayetano. I have a picture that was taken of that first schoolhouse they built there. It was just a little board building of one room, and it was all built out of one by sixes.

The first circus that came into the valley was in Ventura a little while after the railroad was built. Of course lots of people from Sespe went down. There was Bill Hickerson, the Stone boys, Mat Kenney, and a lot of others. The circus was offering ten dollars to anybody that could ride a little burro that they had. Well, Bill Hickerson would try anything, so he went out and got on the burro. He got on and wrapped his legs around and locked them together under the burro's belly. Then he laid down on the animal's back and put his arms around its neck. The burro just bucked and bucked, but he could not do anything with Bill, could not get him off. Finally, he laid down and rolled over, but Bill just hung on and rolled over too. The burro got up and quit bucking when he found he could not get the rider off. Bill got off and demanded his ten dollars, but the ringmaster said, "You didn't ride him; you just got off." Ed. Stone, Mat Kinney, and some of the other boys got right down out of their seats and walked up to the ringmaster and said, "You better give Bill his ten dollars or there won't be any ringmaster here for the rest of the show." He sure poured out that ten dollars in a hurry.

When I was a small boy, I think I was about five or six, there was a man by the name of I. D. Lord had sheep over near where the Hardison Ranch is now. Lord Creek and Lord Canyon were named for him. He camped along the ditch where my father took out his water. Father went up there one night to buy sheep for us to butcher, and I went along. I had seen Lord before but never with his hat off. When he took off his hat, he did not have a hair on his head, not even an eyebrow. I found out afterwards that he was born that way, never did have any hair. Of course I was a kid, and I looked at him kind of funny and asked him where his hair was — didn't he have any hair?

Lord said, "Oh yes, I used to have hair when I was a young man, but when I was about thirty years old my hair began to turn grey and some old woman told me that if I would kill a bear and take the

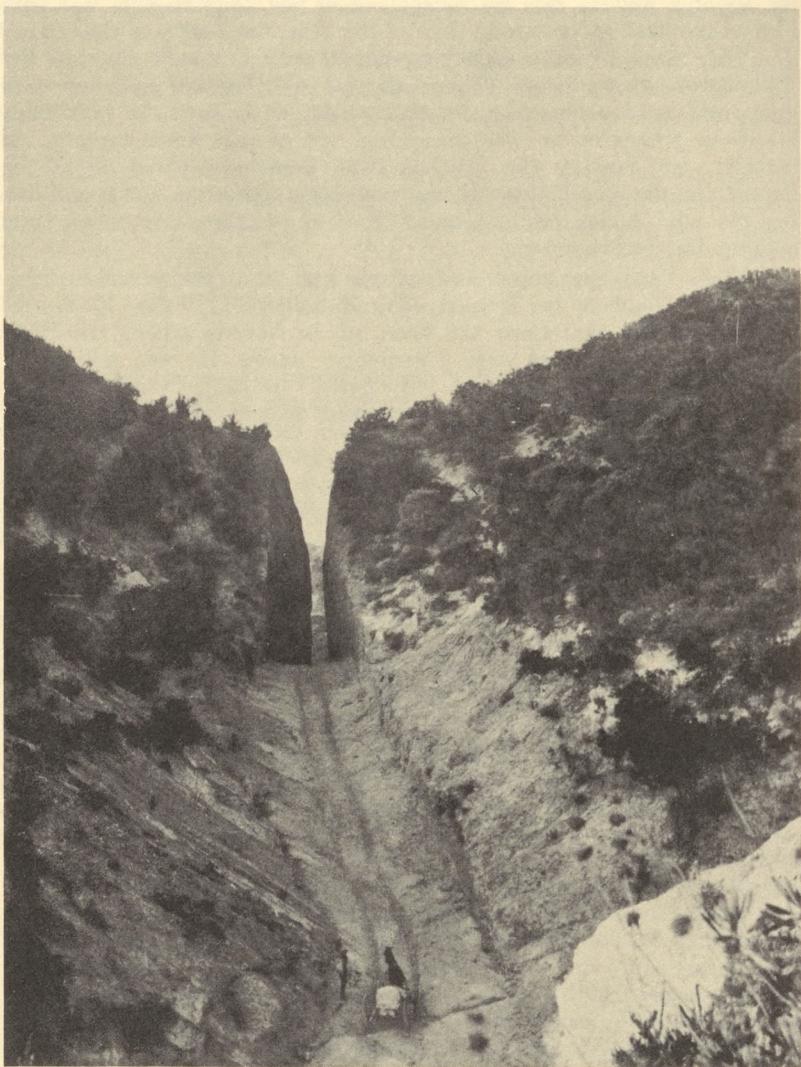
grease of the bear and grease my head my hair would never turn gray. I went and killed a bear and greased my head and kept it well greased for about a month, and my hair all came out. The trouble was that I killed the bear at the wrong time of the year, the bear was shedding."

They used to have preaching about once a month over in the Willowgrove Schoolhouse. There was an old Baptist preacher over there, and Lord, who was a Baptist, would get someone to look after his sheep whenever he was preaching, get on his horse, and go to church. One Sunday the minister was preaching about John the Baptist and the wild honey. He was explaining about the locust and eating the wild honey and he said, "You know, these locust are just nothing but grasshoppers."

Well, Lord was about half asleep, but when the preacher mentioned grasshoppers he jumped up and hollered, "Piutes, by God!" The trouble was that Lord had been out in Nevada among the Piute Indians, and the Piutes were grasshopper eaters. He was telling my father about it afterwards and, "By golly," he said, "I never felt so ashamed in all my life. Everybody turned around and stared at me."

Up until the railroad came through, there were not any stores in the country from Santa Paula to Newhall. A man by the name of Kellogg, who lived near Pole Creek, had a little store and a traveling grocery wagon. He had six horses and one wagon to carry his feed in and another in which he went around the country selling groceries. He peddled groceries all around in the Castaic country, and he even went to Los Angeles to get his supplies when he had sold out. When he came back, he would have a regular grocery store on wheels. He used to peddle at the oil wells up around Newhall in those days, and for some reason or other they did not like him very well. He would get eggs and chickens and when he went down to Los Angeles to get his new supply of groceries, he would sell his chickens there. He carried his chicken coops and put them under his wagon at night. When he camped around Newhall, the oil well boys would slip up at night and open the coops and let all the chickens out. Poor old man! He would have to take about half a day to catch his chickens, and sometimes he did not get them until they went to roost that night.

At the Newhall grade there was not any tunnel like there was in later years; they had to go up over the mountains and through what was known as Beale's Cut at the top. The grade down the south side was real steep, so steep that when you started down you could not stop. At the bottom of the grade were two big old trees, and it was here that the oil well boys thought they could play a trick on Kellogg. They tied a big one-inch rope between the trees, the idea being to pull the top off the old man's covered wagon as he came down the steep descent. But Kellogg was very cautious. He knew if he started down and there was somebody coming up the one-way road, there was no place to get out of the way; so he went down first to see if there was anybody coming. He found that big rope stretched across the road and just took



Beale's Cut in the 1870's

it and put it in his wagon. Of course it did not cost the fellows at the oil wells anything, because they had swiped it from the oil company. The old man got about a hundred feet of good rope and made something out of it after all.

There used to be an old fellow that had a little mine up Soledad Canyon, and about once or twice a year (when he got a little money) he would come down to Santa Paula and spend his money. He never got drunk; he just came down and sat around and drank beer. He never drank anything but beer. In the daytime he would go out on the streets and tell the kids yarns about bears and mining stories. One day somebody asked him why it was that he came right past Newhall, why he did not go there instead of Santa Paula. "Well," he said, "I used to go to Newhall and drink beer but those fellows would spike me with whiskey and get me drunk, and then they would take all my money away from me. I come down to Santa Paula because I can have a good time here and nobody ever bothers me, nobody ever mistreated me at all." He would stay around about a week or ten days camped down in the willows, and then he would get a grubstake and go back to Soledad Canyon and stay there and mine until the next time he got a notion he wanted to come and have a good time.

Everybody thought 1884 was going to be a dry year. It did not rain a drop until the 28th of January when, my father said, it started in to rain about eight or nine o'clock at night. The clouds were very high, and it started in with a few big drops; but by morning it was quite a rain. It rained off and on for two weeks, but it was a cold rain with snow on the mountains down to about the 500 foot level. The last day we had a rain gauge out, and father measured and emptied it in a downpour at eight o'clock at night. In the morning when we got up, the storm had turned warm and there was practically no snow left on the mountains. That is when they had the high water in the river. Up until that time the main channel of the Sespe River was only about a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet wide from about Moe Fine's place down to where the Sespe bridge is now. I remember they threw a rope across there during that winter before the high water. They crossed the river just above where the Sespe bridge is now and threw a rope across and ferried over the mail. The banks were about 25 or 30 feet high there and formed a narrow channel. During the 1884 flood it crumbled the banks down and filled up the channel to where it is now. That is the reason that the Sespe overflows whenever there is high water now, overflows and runs out towards the east. It never ran that way until 1884. The last night it rained four inches and melted all the snow in the mountains.

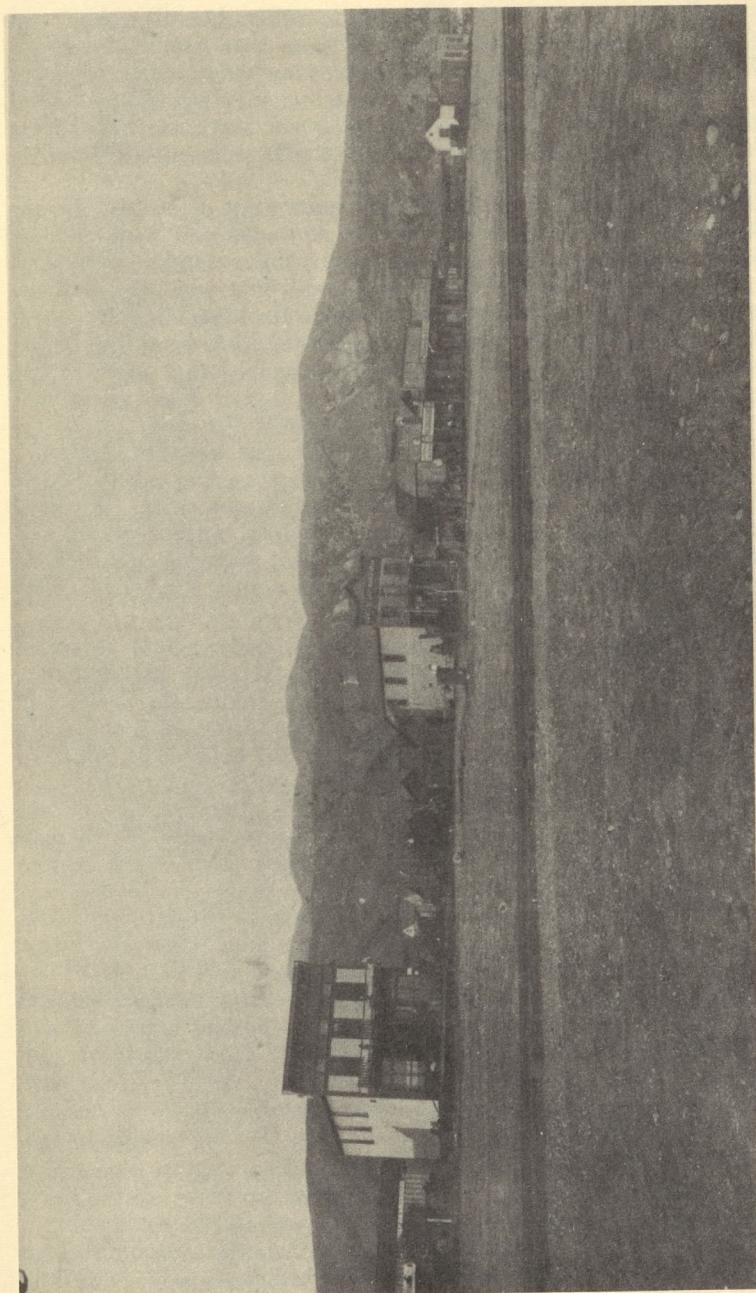
In 1885 the country all grew up with mustard. There was lots of mustard in the valley, and when it got ripe there was a fellow by the name of Chormicle got an idea in his head he could harvest the seed. He found out you could sell mustard seed to some company in the east that was making mustard plasters. He got a contract for that wild

mustard seed. He took an old header and took the sickle out of it and used the reel to beat out the seed. It was dry mustard, and he harvested a good many thousand pounds of seed around the country. All the expenses he had was for the horses and one man to run the header and another to sack up the seed. He made a pretty good stake out of it.

Along about 1871 or 1872 the *Youths Companion*, I believe it was, sent out some packagees of beans and a man by the name of Nidever got a batch of them. They called them butter beans. He planted these butter beans and found them a very fine thing to eat, so he saved a lot of the seeds. Finally after a year or two he had quite a lot of them and thought maybe they would be good to eat as dry beans, so he started raising them commercially. That was the start of the lima bean industry in Ventura County. Later a man by the name of Daly had a patch of beans, and out in the middle of this field he found one great stock that would produce three or four times as much as the regular lima bean. He saved that one stock of beans and started raising an improved lima. In a few years he had enough beans to plant 80 acres from that one vine. After that you could not sell any lima beans except the Daly Improved Lima. That is what brought up the high production of the lima bean all over Ventura County. Daly sold all the seed that he could produce and got two cents a pound premium over and above any other seed beans you could raise.

During the campaign of 1888 the big political battle was over the tariff and free trade. They had a big political rally and torch light procession in Fillmore one night, and the congressman from southern California was there to speak. The next morning after the speech Brice Grimes was around. Brice was alway fooling around in politics and had a desire to run for office. He was a Democrat and was always hollering free trade. Brice cornered the congressman and called him out to one side and said, "I'm for free trade and I'm a Democrat, but for God's sake don't take the duty off of prunes!" The fact of the matter was the Grimes had a prune orchard over in Grimes Canyon. He did not want to take the duty off prunes because if they did, he would not be able to sell his on the open market.

About 1880 my father had a big honey crop, and a man by the name of Hunt had quite a lot of honey, also. They gathered up more honey from some place else and found out that they could sell it for about a cent a pound more in Seattle than they could in San Francisco. San Francisco was the usual market for honey in those days. So my father and Mr. Hunt shipped the honey to Seattle. They got it on a steamer that had brought down a load of lumber to Ventura from Seattle. The boat was going back empty, and they had to have ballast if they did not have anything to haul. They would have to get rocks and put in the boat if nothing else. So they took the honey and carried it to Seattle for nothing. My father and Mr. Hunt went along to sell it. When they got to Seattle, they met the man that they had been negotiating with and made the sale right away. They expected to take the next



Early View of Fillmore

boat back at ten o'clock on the following morning; but when they went to get their money, they found that the man that bought the honey would not be in until afternoon. As a result they had to wait a week for the next boat. They were lucky. The boat that they would have sailed on went out into Puget Sound and the ocean and was never heard from again. No one ever knew what became of it; they never found any remains of it anywhere.

Hartley Sprague at one time raised quite a lot of horses. He was a little short of feed one year and thought he would take them out near Stone Corral and keep them there for two or three months in the summer time. He hired Bill Hickerson to go with him and help herd the horses. Now old Bill was the scariest fellow in the mountains. He would never sit alone around a campfire at night but had to be sitting beside someone; he was afraid of the bears. It happened that some of the Sespe boys were going out deer hunting at Squaw Flats about that time, and they told Sprague that they would help him drive the horses out. There were two of the Stone boys, Ted, Nat and Ed. Bickman, and someone else. They all rode together, and when they got to Squaw Flats the boys going hunting made their permanent camp. The boys got up early the next morning and went hunting, while Sprague and Bill Hickerson gathered up Hartley's horses and started over for Stone Corral. Bill was riding a little white mule with a great big saddle. They got over to Stone Corral about ten o'clock.

The two Stone boys had come down to the corral to get some water; they had not shot any deer and were on their way back to camp. One of them said, "Let's give Bill a good scare." After the horses had passed, they jumped into the brush and made a lot of noise and a big "v---of." Sprague realized what was going on and hollered at Bill, "It's a bear; run for your life, Bill." Hickerson turned around on his mule and started to get away, and Sprague took out after him and chased him about fifty yards trying to scare him a little more. He thought he would stop and come back soon but he did not. They could see him about a mile up the trail, that old mule just a flying. He finally went over the hill and back into Squaw Flats. When he got into camp old man Stone, who always went along with the boys when they went hunting, was there making camp. Bill rode up and yelled to Mr. Stone, "A bear's got Hartley; a bear's got Hartley." Stone looked skeptical and Bill added, "Yes, he has; when I left there he had him down and was crunching on his bones." Stone said that he did not have his gun and was not about to go bear hunting without it — the bear would have to wait. In about an hour or so Hartley and the boys came in, and old Bill just sat around and looked down his nose. He had nothing to say.

1878 and 1879 were fairly good years, and the country was grown up with grass. During a heavy east wind storm there was a man going along the road about where the old Sespe depot used to be smoking a pipe. He put the pipe in his pocket because the wind was blowing so hard and he did not want to scatter any sparks. But when he got a little

ways farther, he found the pocket of his coat was on fire. He got his coat off and it fell on to the ground, and that grass took fire. The wind was blowing a gale from the northeast, and it wasn't but a little while until that fire got down to where the Santa Clara School is now. All of a sudden the wind changed to the west, and there was a fire front about four miles wide. The first that people living up the Avenue knew that there was any fire was when they saw the smoke coming. Of course, it was too late. In less than two hours the fire was clear to the top of San Cayetano Mountain. Mr. Joy and Joe Stone were at our house fighting the fire; and when the wind changed, father told them to get out and go home as quickly as possible to save their own places. But they got so excited and scared about the fire neither of them went home, and their houses burned. They went across the river to the east side and sat there on the bank all afternoon and watched.

About 1880 a man by the name of Captain Murray was fooling around off the coast of Hueneme and found a spring of fresh water about a mile from shore. The water coming up was perfectly fresh. At that time all the wells around what was called New Jerusalem, or El Rio, were artesian. But after they put wells down around Oxnard and began to pump the water, all the artesian wells stopped flowing. They did not go dry, but the water level went down and they had a pumping proposition. The trouble now around Oxnard is that the water that naturally flowed out into the ocean and formed springs like Captain Murray's, is pumped out for irrigation; and salt water is coming back in.

I believe it was about 1908 that Ventura County took over Foster Park and made a county park of it. Mr. Atmore and I were talking one day, and we thought it would be a good idea to get the county to take over Kenney's Grove and make a park out of it. We contacted a few people, and they thought it would be a good idea. We were going to get up a petition and see if we could not buy it. There were ten acres there in the Sespe Land and Water Company, who had tried to sell it for twenty years at \$150 an acre without success. It was absolutely worthless for an orange grove, and they thought they could sell it for \$150. Mr. Atmore and I concluded we better go to Mr. McNabb and see if we could get an option on it before we started with the petition. Mr. Atmore went in, and Mr. McNabb replied that he would think it over and give him an answer in a day or two. Mr. Atmore went back the next day, and Mr. McNabb wanted \$300 an acre. That was the way with old John; whenever anybody wanted to buy anything he always raised the price on it. He held out for ten or fifteen years more, but finally sold it to the county. I do not know how much he got for it.

Many of the incidents I have given have been told to me, but a lot of them are from memory. I know a lot of this I cannot prove is correct, but that is the way I got it. A lot of things I have seen, but just like anything my version of it may not be correct. You never can get two people to see a murder or anything else the same.

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Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
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*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

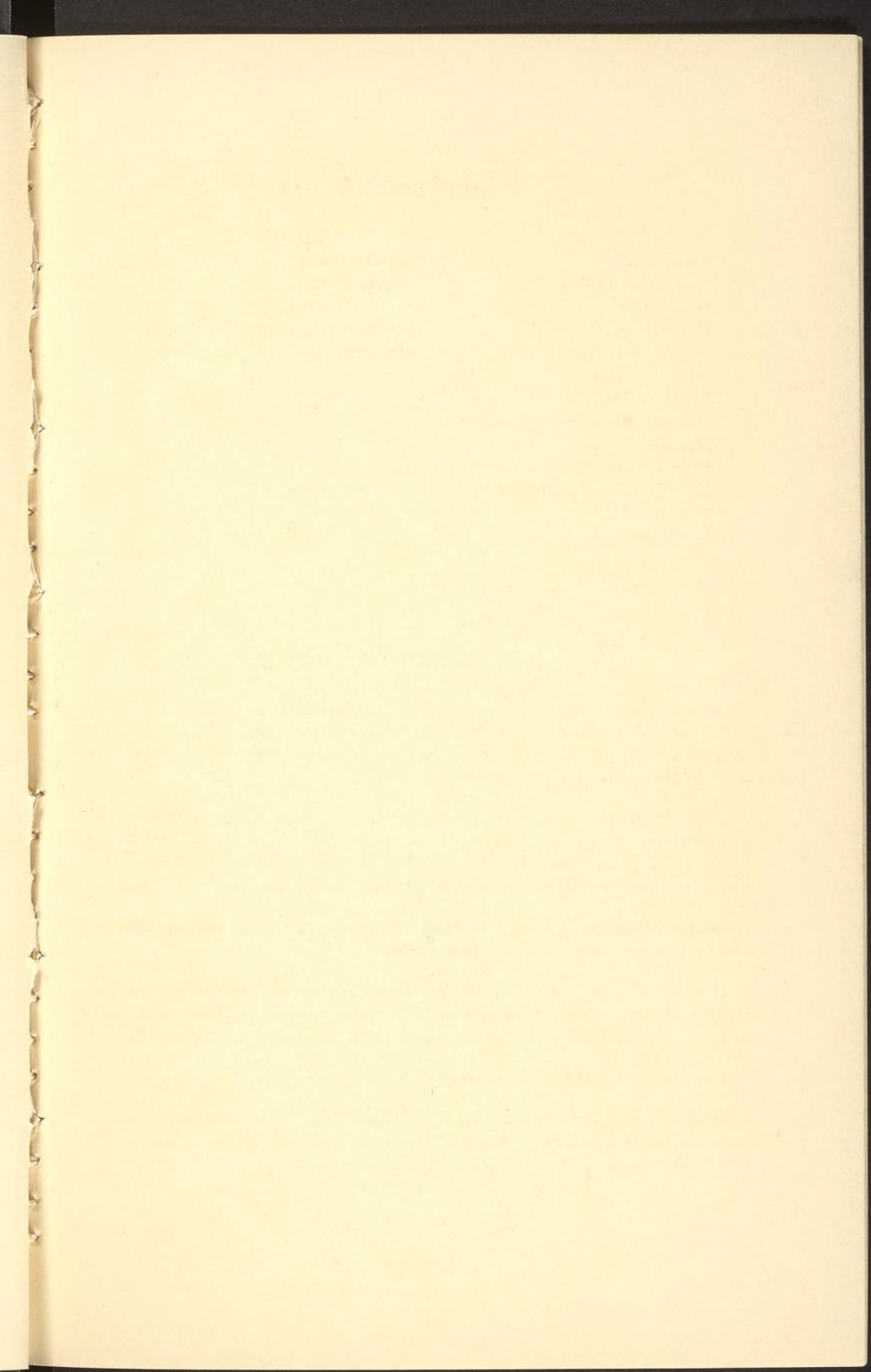
*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

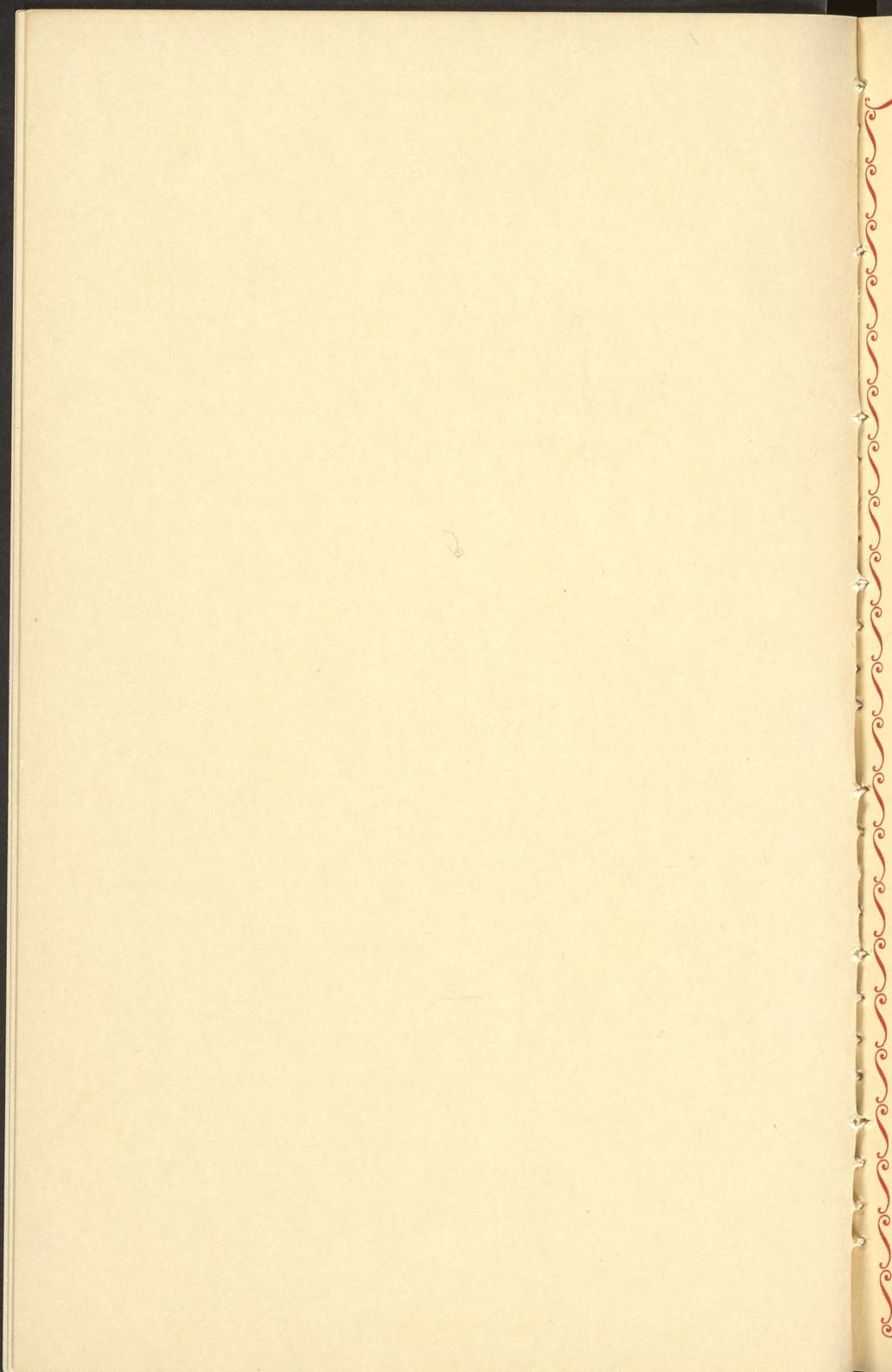
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

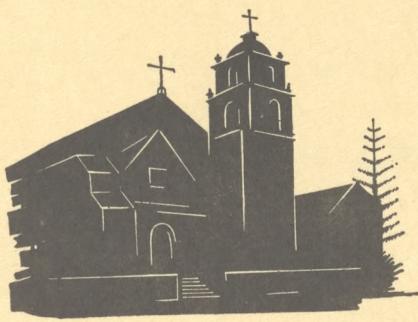
*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

*Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.







VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

February 1963

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

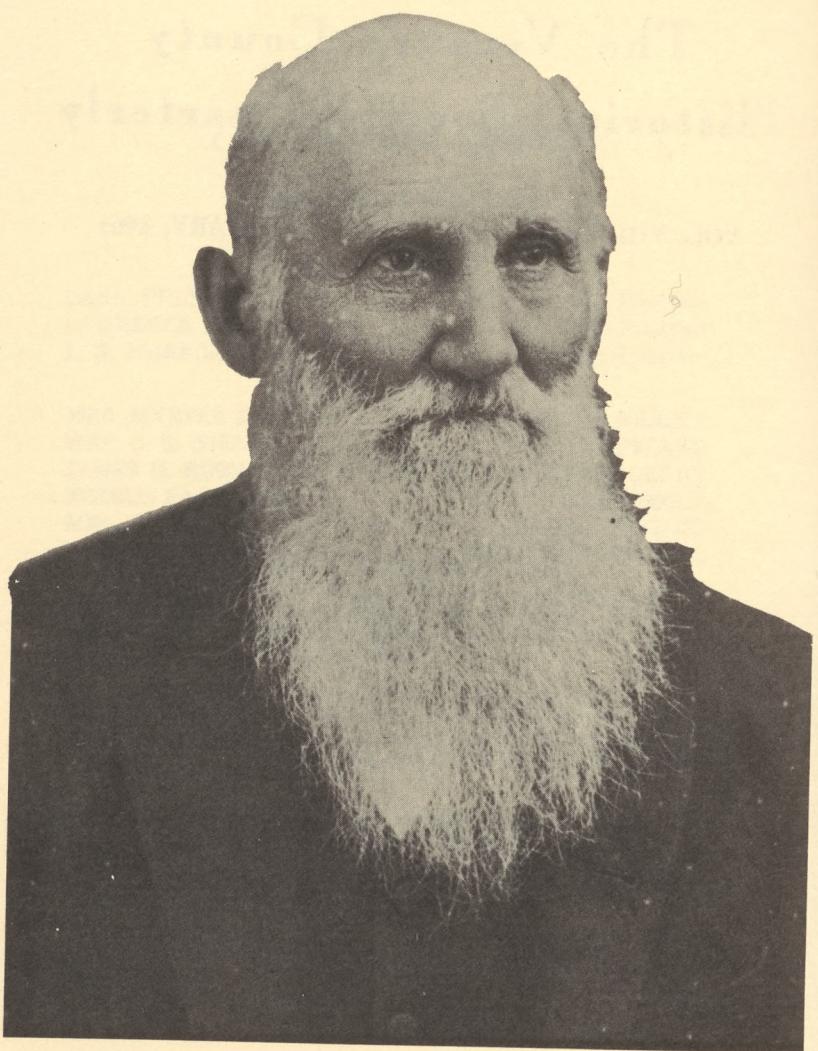
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Historical Society Quarterly

VOL. VIII, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1963

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*The Farmers Ditch*



Abner Haines

## *The Farmers Ditch*

By V. M. FREEMAN\*

Life Member A.S.C.E.

The settlers who came to the Santa Clara Valley in the 1860's were dependent entirely on the surface flow of the Santa Clara River, it's tributaries and the Saticoy Springs as sources of water supply. There were no producing water wells at the time. Santa Clara River surface flow and Saticoy Springs were firm supplies of water and available for use. In the 60's water required for domestic and stock watering purposes was hauled from the River or Saticoy Springs.

The Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy, a Mexican Land Grant, the boundaries of which embrace approximately 18,000 acres, situated in the valley from the east City Limits of Santa Paula to Five-Points in the City of Ventura, was subdivided in 1867 and laid out in lots containing approximately 150 acres. Prior to 1867 the principal use of this land was cattle and sheep raising. The subdivision of the Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy signaled the agricultural development of some of the most fertile land in Southern California.

In 1869 there were a number of men who having purchased land in the valley (15 to 25 dollars per acre) recognized the value of bringing water to their properties from the Santa Clara River by means of a ditch constructed on a grade contour from a point near the junction of Santa Paula Creek and Santa Clara River, westerly along the north side of the valley.

The first meeting of valley property owners was held February 3, 1869 on the bank of Santa Paula Creek near it's junction with the Santa Clara River for the purpose of organizing a company to construct a ditch through the valley for delivery of river water for domestic and other uses. The February 3, 1869 meeting and subsequent meetings resulted in the construction of what is locally known as and called, "The Farmers Ditch". Minutes of February 3, 1869 meeting follows:

*Pursuant to previous notice the citizens of Santa Clara Valley, assembled at Mr. E. B. Higgins ranch on the Santa Paula for the purpose of organizing a Company to construct a water ditch through said valley for irrigating and other purposes. The meeting was organized by the appointment of Abner Haines as Chairman and E. B. Higgins, Secretary. On Motion Peter Boyles was appointed to make survey from a proposed starting point to determine whether from said*

\*Farmers Irrigation Company, Construction Engineer, 1918 to 1921.

Farmers Irrigation Company, Manager and Engineer, 1921 to 1959.

*point the water can be brought on Mr. Crane's land. On motion it was resolved that the starting point be fixed on the Santa Clara river at or below the junction of the Santa Paula.*

*The wages of laborers and teams was then fixed by vote at one dollar and 25/100 per day for each man and the same for each team.*

*Voted that Peter Boyle be appointed Super't. and Alexander Gray, Secretary and Treasurer.*

*On Motion it was resolved that the books remain open for four months for subscription to the Stock.*

*E. B. Higgins, Secretary*

J. L. Crane, was farming a part of what is now known as the Orchard Farm. Abner Haines, farmed land located southeast of the intersection of Telegraph and Briggs Roads.

Along the left side of the page recording the minutes of the first meeting, written faintly in pencil, not recorded by the copy camera is the following statement.

*Two or three days after meeting notices were posted by Alexander Gray, one at Gries, one at Haines and one at Grays. 20,000 miners inches water claim".*

In other words they filed on 20,000 miners inches of Santa Clara River water.

These water seekers must have wanted to be sure they filed on an ample supply of Santa Clara river water. The capacity of the ditch they constructed was approximately 2,000 miners inches.

Minutes of subsequent meetings of Trustees of the Farmers Canal and Water Company indicate they were feeling their way along rather carefully in locating and constructing the Farmers Ditch.

The first Board of Trustees consisting of J. L. Crane, Abner Haines, E. T. Todd, J. W. Johnson and Alex Gray were elected for the ensuing three months at a meeting held February 8, 1870. The minutes of this meeting held on the bank of Santa Paula Creek state that following the election of Trustees, "the company then proceeded to tap the river and conduct water into their ditch which had been previously executed".

The following was recorded in the minutes of the meeting held at H. Stone's place on May 7, 1870.

*The company having become satisfied that the present tap of the river is too low down, instructed the Trustees to select another above the mouth of the Santa Paula and to take legal counsel in relation to the matter of our right to do so.*

They probably had difficulty in diverting the river water from the first tap, as they called the point of diversion.

The first location of the canal proved to be unsatisfactory. Mr. J. T. Stow, Civil Engineer was retained by the Board of Trustees to make a survey and relocate the canal. Mr. Stow made two surveys,

Santa Paula Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869.

Persuant to previous Notice, the Citizens of Santa Clara Valley, assembled at Mr. E. B. Higgins' Ranch on the Santa Paula for the purpose of organizing a Company to construct a Water Ditch through Said Valley for irrigating and other purposes. The Meeting was organized by the appointment of Abner Haines as Chairman and E. B. Higgins Secretary. On Motion Peter Boyle was appointed to make a Survey from a proposed Starting point to determine whether from Said point the water can be brought on Mt. Crane's Land.

<sup>motion</sup> It was resolved that the Starting point be fixed on the Santa Clara river at or below the junction of the Santa Paula.

The Wages of Laborers and teams was then fixed by vote at one dollar and  $\frac{25}{40}$  per day for each man and the same for each team.

Voted that Peter Boyle be appointed Super<sup>t</sup>.

And Alexander Gray Secretary and treasurer.

On Motion it was resolved that the Books remain open for four months for subscription to the Stock

Secretary.

Santa Clara River Feb 8<sup>th</sup> 1870

The Members of the Santa Clara Water Company convened on the banks of Said river near its junction with the Santa Paula, and resolved to incorporate themselves into a Company to be known as the Farmer's Canal and Water Company.

The following persons were then elected as trustees of the Company. — — — — —

one with a grade of  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch per rod and one with  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch per rod. Minutes of the meeting held in the Briggs School House on December 31, 1870 follows:

*Meeting called to order by President Wason, J. P. Culter, E. Todd, M. D. L. Todd reported they had examined the ground near the mouth of the Santa Paula. And had found a favorable starting point a short distance above the junction of the Santa Paula with the Santa Clara, and were satisfied that the ditch could be taken out at this point and made available to nearly all of the Briggs Ranch by using a less grade than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to the rod. On motion meeting adjourned to meet again on the ground mentioned above on Monday 2d of January 1871.*

*J. P. Culter, Secretary*

G. G. Briggs bought the entire Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy containing 18,000 acres in 1862 from Wallace Moore for \$45,000.00.

The following news item appeared in the December 9, 1871 issue of the Ventura Signal.

*Land Prices: The price of land are, for the very best, \$36.00 per acre. For good, and located not over 8 miles of San Buenaventura, 20 to 25 dollars, for pasture lands 2 to 4 dollars per acre. (Gold)*

Following a meeting held on Jan. 2, 1871 work was started on construction of the ditch from the new point of diversion. L. D. Chilson was employed to make the survey for the final location.

Surveys required at the time the open ditch was replaced with a reinforced concrete pipe line indicate the grade used in original construction was approximately  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch per rod which equals  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch fall per 100 linear feet of ditch.

At the stockholders meeting held April 9, 1871, it was voted that a general invitation be given to "all wishing water to work on the ditch and take pay in either water or stock . . . On motion the ten hour system was adopted as a day's work and wages fixed at three dollars per day for a man and the same for a team, payable in stock".

Real progress was made in constructing the ditch during 1871 according to news items published in the Ventura Signal:

*Saturday April 22, 1871. Irrigating Canals: In consequence of the unusually dry winter, a lively interest has been shown in ditch making. One tapping the Santa Clara River, on the northside, some distance above the Santa Paula Canyon, and which had been laid over for an after harvest job, is being pushed thru as fast as possible. This ditch is intended to supply settlers on the Saticoy, and is of a capacity to flood many thousands of acres.*

*June 24, 1871. A fine Ditch—The Saticoy—Santa Paula Ditch is slowly winding it's way down the valley. It is a capacious waterway, and will suffice to irrigate many thousand acres of as fine lands as can*

be found in the Santa Clara Valley. Though too late to sow barley, flax and some other crops, it will reserve many fields of corn from certain failure.

Mr. M. H. Anderson, a Santa Clara Valley pioneer, was interviewed in the late 1920's regarding land prices and interest rates in the 1870's. Mr. Anderson gave as one of the reasons for the low price of land: "Corn was the only sure crop, other crops were a plant and wait and see proposition, the country was so new we did not know which grains, vegetables and fruits would mature and yield satisfactorily. Interest rates were high for the reason there was practically no money in the valley, commodities were bartered extensively."

On November 1, 1871 the Trustees received an application from S. Bristol, G. W. Chrisman, William Evans and others: "to unite with the company to widen and extend the canal down the valley as far as practicable."

On November 7, 1871 the Trustees agreed to widen and extend the ditch:

*Ventura Signal. Nov. 11, 1871. The North side Canal, on the Santa Clara River so Mr. Bristol informs us, will be extended down the valley, the arrangements are made. This is good news. Had this work been completed last spring, farmers along it's line would have been better off by tens of thousands of dollars.*

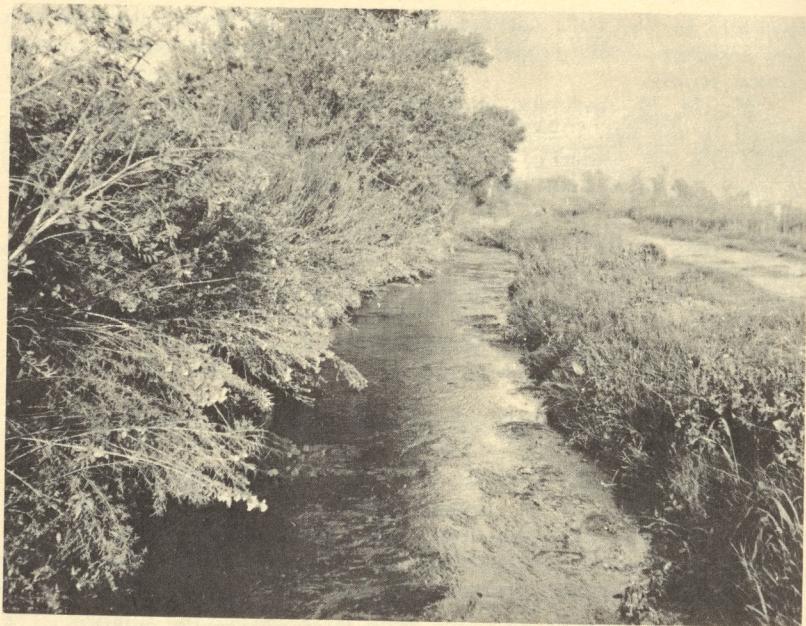
The first mention of water rates is shown in the minutes of a Trustees meeting held Feb. 9, 1872. At this meeting it was ordered:

*Collection of water rent to the month of July be at the rate of five dollars per acre, after July to be one dollar per acre.*

The first declaration of policy relating to operation and maintenance of the ditch was recorded at the stockholders meeting held Sept. 7, 1872. The stockholders primary interest was to provide an adequate supply of water for stock and domestic use. Water for irrigation use at the time was considered secondary in importance for the reason anytime water was not in the ditch stockholders were forced to haul water from the river or Saticoy Springs for stock and domestic use. Whenever the ditch went dry the Stockholders probably gave the superintendent a very bad time. In 1872 the Farmers Canal and Water Company had not acquired rights of way through all of the properties traversed by the canal. They were probably having trouble with property owners whose lands were occupied by the canal without a right of way and accounts for paragraphs 6 and 7 of the policy resolutions adopted Sept. 7, 1872.

*Briggs School House, Sept. 7th 1872. Meeting called to order by President Haines. Mr. Wason appointed secretary pro tempore. The following resolutions were passed.*

*1st. Whereas the principal object of the Farmer's Canal and Water Co. is to furnish water for stock and domestic use, the stockholders instruct the Trustees not to allow at any time such a free use*



The Farmers Ditch

*of the water for irrigating purposes as shall deprive any part of the Canal of sufficiency of water to supply stockholders along the line with what is necessary for stock and domestic use.*

*2nd. The Trustees are instructed not to allow any such defilement of the water of the Canal by hogs-sheep-cattle and horses as shall unfit it for domestic use. But are hereby authorized to prosecute each and every such offense so thoroughly and effectually as to abate the nuisance.*

*3rd. All water taken from the ditch for stock, house or irrigating purposes shall be conducted through a box or flume which shall be constructed and put into the ditch under the direction of the Trustees alone—In such a manner that they shall be able to measure the amount of water used or drawn from the Canal.*

*4th. In order to insure a perpetual supply of stock water in the Canal—No water box shall be put on level with the bottom of the Canal.*

*5th. All water taken from the ditch for the benefit of Stockholders shall be duly charged to his account by the Sec'y.*

*6th. No person shall be allowed to handle the gates or to take water out of the ditch except the Superintendent.*

*7th. The penalty for taking out water from the canal without the direction of the Superintendent shall be five dollars for each offense and the forfeiture of their next run of water.*

8th. *The Trustees shall employ a superintendent and assistance to patrol the ditch, raise and shut gates. Construct water ducts, repair levies and do any other work necessary for the protection of the canal and for it's efficient management.*

9th. *The Sec' of the Co. shall be paid two dollars and fifty cents for each day where spent in it's services.*

Letter to Editor of the Ventura Signal, Published August 10, 1872.

*Editor Signal: It may be interesting to some of your readers to see a statement of the working of the Farmer's Canal, hence I ask a brief space in your column.*

*The progress of the work has been greatly retarded by the non-arrival of the Cargo of flume lumber, and on it's arrival the harvest was so nearly approaching us, that temporary suspension of business became necessary, but now work has been resumed, and the fluming is being put up with rapidity. The excavations having been finished last Spring to a distance of about fifteen miles. In the upper section of the Canal, where the flumes were enlarged, from last year with such lumber as we had on hand last spring, the water has been turned in for several months, and has been made quite available for irrigating purposes, though only a small head has been used, on account of some weak embankment, which we find to be much more reliable than last year.*

*We find the grade to be all that need be desired, with the small head of water we now have, we find the current is quite good, and when a full head is brought into requisition the current will be all, I think, that the ground will bear without washing. We find in Los Angeles and vicinity, (the land of ditches) a much less grade than ours used; some not exceeding twenty inches to the mile, while ours has a uniform fall of thirty inches to the mile. As to the supply, as yet, it is ample, not more than half the river having been used.*

Sec. Farmers Canal Co.  
J. P. Cutler

The Trustees meeting on September 29, 1872 is of particular interest. The first rates for water used for stock and domestic purposes were adopted.

Sept. 29, 1872. *The Trustees met at Abner Haines place. The following resolutions were then adopted. That the rates of water for the months of Sept., October and November, be for house and domestic use one dollar and fifty-cents per inch. Those who haul water from the ditch one dollar per month, horses and neat cattle ten cents per month, sheep and hogs two cents per month. No stock to be allowed free access to the ditch. Meeting adj.*

J. P. Cutler, Sec'y.

Minutes of Stockholders and Trustee meetings held prior to Nov. 22, 1872 do not give any information relating to how far down the valley the canal had been constructed. Minutes of Trustees meeting of Nov. 22, 1872 show the canal was in operation at a point near what is now the intersection of Telephone and South Kimball Roads. At that time Mr. John Nicholds owned lots 57 and 58 of the Subdivision of the Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy. "On motion, Cutler and Bristol were appointed a committee to visit the ditch near Mr. Nicholds to see if same had received damage from stock watered there."

Financial difficulties of the Farmers Canal and Water Co. started when the Trustees at the meeting held May 14, 1873 ordered the Secretary and Treasurer to borrow \$3000.00. Details of the loan arrangements are given in the minutes of Trustee meeting dated June 13, 1873.

*Secretary's Office, Saticoy, June 13th, 1873. Trustees Meeting. Present S. Bristol, Abner Haines and E. A. Duval, being quorum. Mr. Haines called the meeting to order and proceeded to consider the request of Messrs. Chrisman, Bristol and Todd in regard to securing the board for money borrowed and etc. On motion of Mr. Bristol the following resolution was adopted. Whereas this company is indebted to various parties amounting to more than two thousand dollars and whereas the company has no present means to pay said debts without impairing the value and interest of the property of the Stockholders in said company, and whereas S. Bristol, G. W. Chrisman, L. M. Todd, E. A. Duval and Abner Haines have raised the sum of (\$3000) Three Thousand dollars gold coin upon their individual obligation and have loaned the same to the company for the purpose of paying said debts and prosecuting the construction of their ditch to completion, now therefore to secure to the said S. Bristol, G. W. Chrisman, L. M. Todd, E. A. Duval and Abner Haines the payment of said \$3000 in gold coin of the United States in one year from this date with interest thereon from the 3d day of June, 1873 at the rate of one and one-half per cent per month, it is ordered by the Board of Trustees of the Farmers Canal and Water Company that the President and Secretary of said Company cause to be executed and delivered to said S. Bristol, G. W. Chrisman, L. M. Todd, E. A. Duval and Abner Haines the promissory note of said Company signed by said President and countersigned by the Secretary, which note is hereby created a lien upon all the real and personal property and franchises of said company.*

First assessment on capital stock of the Company was levied at the Board of Trustees Meeting held July 8, 1873.

*Tuesday July 8th, 1873. The Board of Trustees of the Farmers Canal and Water Company met, full Board present, less Mr. Todd. On Motion by S. Bristol, and by a unanimous vote of the full Board an assessment of seven per cent being 35 cents per share was levied upon the capital stock of the corporation, payable on or before the 8th day of August, 1873, to E. A. Duval, Secretary of the Company, at Saticoy,*

in the said County of Ventura. Any Stock upon which this assessment shall remain unpaid on the 9th day of August, 1873, shall be delinquent and advertised for sale at public auction and unless payment is made before. Will be sold on the 10th day of September 1873, to pay delinquent assessment together with costs of advertising and expense of sale.

The Super't. authorized to set boxes for measuring water for irrigation and sale of water at  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents by inch for 12 hours running or per day 25c.

Rate of water for domestic use \$1.50 per month including four head of stock where the water is hauled. But two dollars where side streams are used.

On motion meeting adj.

E. A. Duval, Sec'y.

Water rates were increased at the Trustee's meeting held November 12, 1873.

Saticoy Nov. 12th, 1873. Board of Trustees of the F. C. & W. Co. met at the office of the Secretary. Present A. Haines, C. A. Duval and S. Bristol. By unanimous vote the rate of water was raised as follows. For family use excluding stock of all kinds when the water is taken out of the ditch in buckets or run in streams not exceeding eighty rods distant below ditch \$2.50 per month. Streams run exceeding distance of eighty rods \$3.00 and 50 cents added to every  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile. Neat cattle and horses 20c per month per head. Sheep  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cts. hogs 3 cents per month per head payable monthly if not paid the bills made over to a Justice for collection.

Board adjourned.

Mr. Bristol was authorized to hire \$2000.00 at the Trustees meeting held Dec. 20, 1873.

Sec'y. office Saticoy December 20, 1873. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Farmers Canal and Water Company to investigate the financial standing of the company, the indebtedness of the company to date was found to be 4250 dollars and the solvent debt and cash on hand 2230 dollars.

Mr. Bristol was authorized to hire two thousand dollars on Company's a/c that present liabilities of said company be fully settled. And it was further ordered that a meeting of the Board of Trustees be held on Monday Dec. 29th, 1873. At this office for further consultation.

On motion meeting adj.

A note to Juan Camarillo is mentioned in the minutes of Trustees meeting held Dec. 29, 1873. No record of a loan from Mr. Camarillo in minutes of prior meetings.

The company ledger shows the ditch income was \$738.06 for the year of 1873, with capital investment and operating expense of \$7834.91,

which accounts for the borrowing of money and the levying of two assessments on the capital stock of the company. Trouble was brewing for the Farmers Canal and Water Company.

*Col. Hines Office San Buenaventura, May 19th, 1873. Board of Trustees met pursuant to adjournment. Present A. Haines, M. D. L. Todd, S. Bristol, E. A. Duval. On motion by Mr. Bristol the following was adopted by unanimous vote. Resolved by the Board of Trustees that to meet the repairs, current expenses of the company and to pay the expenses and costs of a suit to condemn a portion of the land through which the company's ditch runs, in all estimated to require \$1,000 (one thousand dollars), that an assessment of five per cent upon each dollar of the capital stock being twenty five cents on each and every share of the stock of said company be and is hereby ordered to be assessed. Said resolution was put upon it's passage and carried by the following votes, S. Bristol, M. D. L. Todd, E. A. Duval and Abner Haines. On motion by Mr. Bristol unanimously carried, Col. Hines, Company's attorney was instructed to proceed against parties refusing to give the right of way to the company.*

*Motioned to adjourn and meet Tuesday, May 26th, 1874 at Col. Hines office at San Buenaventura. Carried.*

*E. A. Duval, Sec'y.*

The condemnation suit was filed May 28, 1874, by J. D. Hines, Attorney for Plaintiff.

Complaint recites:

*1st. That plaintiff is a corporation organized on the 8th of February 1870 and having it's principal place of business at Saticoy, County of Ventura, State of California, for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants having lands along it's ditch with water for irrigating and other purposes.*

*2nd. That the inhabitants are not supplied with water except by plaintiff, and can only be supplied from the Santa Clara River, that water in sufficient quantities for irrigation purposes can not be procured by digging wells upon the lands along said ditch.*

*3rd. That plaintiff duly incorporated under an Act of the Legislature entitled "An Act to provide for the formation of Corporations for certain purposes" passed April 14th, 1853, and in force on the 8th day of February 1870, said Corporation did appropriate and divert the waters from the Santa Clara River by means of dams erected on said river, on government land now in the possession of one Barker, and near the mouth of Santa Paula Creek, and did open a ditch twelve feet wide on top and four feet deep with a fall of one quarter to one and one half inches per rod, from said dam to west line of the Rancho Santa Paula and has been for a long time past supplying water to the inhabitants in the vicinity of their ditch.*

*And the plaintiff avers that it has the right to so supply water and for that purpose the right to condemn and the right of way over*

OFFICE OF

Farmers' Canal and Water Company,

Saticoy, Ventura County, Cal., Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> 1874  
To Mr. B. Utman

At a meeting of the Board of Directors held on the 2<sup>d</sup> day of December 1874 an assessment of one (10) per cent. or fifty (50) cents per share, was levied on the capital stock of the corporation, payable in United States gold coin, on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> day of October 1874 to C. A. Duval, Secretary of the Company, at Saticoy, in said County of Ventura.

Any stock upon which this assessment remains unpaid on the 3<sup>d</sup> day of October 1874 shall be delinquent, and advertised for sale at Public Auction, and unless payment is made before, will be sold on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 1874 to pay delinquent assessment, together with costs of advertising and expense of sale.

C. A. DUVAL, Secretary.

Remarks:

This assessment was levied to settle cost of suit to secure right of way, also to assist in satisfying indebtedness incurred in construction of work & repairing of well as running said ditch.

Respy Yours. C. A. Duval, Secy.

Assessment of Stock

*the parcels of land hereafter described, being the land occupied by plaintiffs ditch, and a selvage or strip of land four feet wide for the proper distribution of the waters to the lands along said ditch.*

*4th. That the said strip of twenty feet is necessary as a permanent way for maintaining and repairing said ditch.*

*5th. That this proceeding is instituted for condemning for public uses the land occupied by said ditch, the several parcels whereof, as shown by actual survey, are described as follows:*

*Beginning at a point at head of ditch above and near mouth of Santa Paula Creek, near right bank of Santa Clara River, at dam of plaintiff, and thence run down valley of said river, and on north side thereof, in the following courses and distances, variation 13 45' East.*

*(238 courses with a total length of 1260.98 chains or 15.76 miles are recited, however, a large number of property owners deeded rights of way to the company without compensation.)*

*The same being parcels of the general tract of land of said defendants.*

*6th. That the use to which the said parcel of land is to be applied is a use authorized by law, and condemnation of said land is necessary to such use.*

*Therefore plaintiff prays judgment, condemning the lands described for the use of plaintiff from the head of said ditch to the terminus at the west line of the Rancho Santa Paula, and that plaintiff be adjudged to have the right to construct all necessary dams in the bed of the Santa Clara River and take the water flowing therein to the full capacity of their ditch, and that this Court cause said lands and premises to be appraised and the value of same ascertained if any there be adverse to the plaintiffs herein, and assess and set off damages and benefits if any there be, as to this Court shall appear necessary just, lawful and proper in the premises.*

*J. D. Hines  
Atty. for Plaintiffs*

Court procedures in the 70' were carried on with dispatch; 93 days elapsed from date of filing complaint and the date District Judge Walter Murray rendered a decision. The following table gives names of defendants, lengths of right of way and damages awarded.

<i>Defendant</i>	<i>Length of right of way</i>	<i>Judgment</i>
<i>John Barker</i>	<i>57.97 Chains</i>	<i>\$ 10.00</i>
<i>James B. Ashley</i>	<i>40.74 Chains</i>	<i>20.00</i>
<i>John Tomkins</i>	<i>23.04 Chains</i>	<i>5.00</i>
<i>John Cummings</i>	<i>53.63 Chains</i>	<i>30.00</i>
<i>J. S. Wiley</i>	<i>41.40 Chains</i>	<i>25.00</i>
<i>A. D. Barnard</i>	<i>16.60 Chains</i>	<i>10.00</i>
<i>Ellsworth, Steel et al.</i>	<i>135.75 Chains</i>	<i>320.00</i>

*369.13 Chains = 4.61 miles      \$420.00*

The right of way 20. feet wide through the above named properties contained a total of 11.185 acres. The average damage awarded by the court was \$37.55 per acre of right of way.

The Company ledger shows Colonel Hines was paid \$27.50 on July 1, 1874 and \$100.00 on Oct. 26, 1874. Attorney fee for preparing notice of action, the complaint, answering demurrers of seven defendants, preparing and filing findings of fact by plaintiff, pleading case and preparing 25 right of way deeds was \$127.50.

First mention of Chinamen being employed on the canal construction is recorded in the minutes of Trustees meeting held on June 2, 1874.

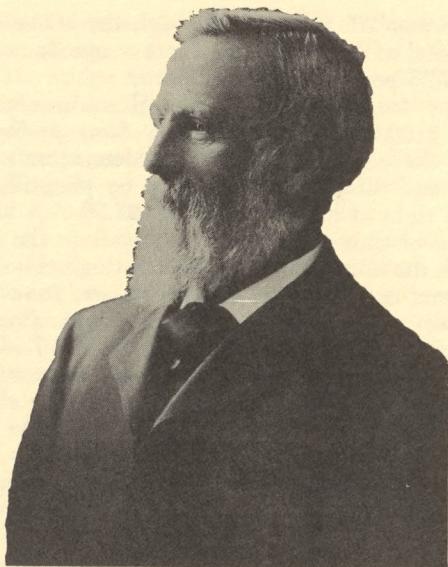
*Farmer's Canal & Water Co. office, Saticoy, June 2d, 1874. The Board of Trustees met pursuant to adjournment. Present M. D. L. Todd, A. Haines, E. A. Duval. On motion by Mr. Todd unanimously carried, The super't. was authorized to effect a loan of four hundred dollars to settle with the chinamen laboring on the ditch, the same to be paid out of the last assessment levied. Also to make inquires as to getting a sufficient amount by giving company's notes in order to satisfy all present indebtedness against the Ditch Company for which the Board of Trustees became personally responsible in the past, and to report at earliest opportunity. Board adj.*

There must have been some arrangement or agreement made to furnish provisions to the Chinese laborers. Farmers Canal and Water Company ledger shows the following entries.

April 22, 1874	to 200 lbs. of rice	14.00
April 22, 1874	to Matches	.25
April 22, 1874	to Salt	.62
April 22, 1874	to Candles	.50
April 22, 1874	to Tobacco	1.00
April 22, 1874	to Soap	.25
May 1, 1874	to 100 lbs. rice	7.00
May 4, 1874	to 1 Hog	12.00
May 5, 1874	to Whisky of M. Cohn	.75
May 16, 1874	to 200 lbs. rice	14.00
May 16, 1874	to Godfish	1.00
May 16, 1874	to Matches and candles	.50
May 16, 1874	to Cash for whisky	1.50
May 20, 1874	to Cash at the ditch	8.00
May 20, 1874	to Road tax on six men	16.00
May 26, 1874	to Poll tax on six men	12.00
June 5, 1874	to Cash to Chinamen	120.00
June 5, 1874	to Two chickens by Todd	1.00
June 5, 1874	to Chinese labor 209 days at 1.50	313.50

Minutes of meetings held June 16 and August 16, 1874 record more money borrowed and right of way matters acted on.

An assessment of fifty cents per share was levied at the Trustees meeting held Sept. 3, 1874.



M. D. L. Todd

On October 13, 1874 the Board of Trustees authorized the borrowing from Mr. P. V. Wright \$2500.00 for a period of one year with interest at the rate of one and one half per cent per month. The company treasurer Mr. James Day was authorized to receive the \$2500.00 from Mr. Wright and deliver to him the mortgage therefor and he was further authorized to pay and cancel the note of the company then in the hands of Juan Camarillo.

Financial condition of the company continued to weaken during 1874. Ledger records show the 1874 ditch income was \$1014.99, capital investments and operating expenses \$4797.39.

In the fall of 1874 control of the Farmers Canal and Water Co. began to change from the stockholders residing in the Santa Paula-Saticoy area to stockholders residing in the Mound-Ventura area. Prior to Oct. 13, 1874 Trustee meetings were held in Saticoy School, Briggs School, or M. D. L. Todd residence. Trustee meetings from Oct. 13, 1874 to June 10, 1876 were held in Col. Hines office, San Buenaventura or the J. A. Day residence.

Minutes of Stockholders meeting held June 1, 1875 record the election of C. G. Finney Jr., R. Atmore, M. D. L. Todd, B. Grimes and J. A. Day Trustees for the period of one year. Following adjournment of stockholders meeting, Trustees elected C. G. Finney, Jr., President, B. Grimes, Secretary and James Day, Treasurer.

At a meeting held June 8, 1875 the new board of Trustees "levied

an assessment of 25 cents per share on the capital stock of the company, instructed superintendent Atmore to push the work as fast as the nature of circumstances would admit, make collections of all money due the company, hire help to work on the canal and render an account of same to the secretary of the company".

The above instructions to the superintendent indicate the canal was being constructed and extended in June 1875.

Mr. E. Nichols, one of the pioneer water men of the Santa Clara Valley told the writer; "The Farmers Ditch was constructed from a point east of Santa Paula to the Prince Barranca in Ventura and surplus water was disposed of in the barranca."

Farmers Canal and Water Company service in the Ventura area was not entirely satisfactory according to the following news item.

*Ventura Signal, June 5, 1875. Water. At a meeting of the Stockholders of the Farmer's Canal and Water Company, the following were elected Trustees for the ensuing year; C. G. Finney, J. A. Day, R. Atmore, B. Grimes, and M. D. L. Todd. The matter of building a large Reservoir near Mr. Arnolds place was informally discussed but no action taken toward the project. Probably no action will be taken this year. Efforts should be made by those who have purchased in the Eells Tract to secure an artesian well. Let all those having purchased combine for the purpose and if those who are experts in artesian boring pronounce the project feasible then let the work be commenced at once. It will undoubtedly pay, water has only been down to the lower end of the ditch once during the season and it is quite clear that if a reservoir is not built there will be a great loss to parties who have already planted out orchards. If the Farmers Canal and Water Company cannot furnish water and an artesian well cannot without too much expense be put down then an effort should be made in connection with Messrs. Vassault and others interested in Ex Mission lands, together with Dixie Thompson, to induce the Santa Anna Water Company to extend it's pipes so as to supply the land referred to. By some means water must be had and we must urge immediate action to secure it. Land with an unfailing supply of water is worth ten times as much as it is without it.*

The beginning of the end of operation of the Farmers Ditch by the original Company is shown by the minutes of stockholders meeting held Jan. 22, 1876.

*San Buena Ventura  
Jan. 22, 1876*

*At a meeting of the stockholders of the Farmers Canal and Water Co., held at the office of Hines and Brooks, eleven thousand six hundred and seventy-nine dollars worth of stock was represented, (11,679.00). The meeting was called to order by President Charles Finney. By request of the President of the Company, Brice Grimes, Secretary of the Company, stated the object of the meeting to be as*

follows: The Company was virtually bankrupt, the canal and other property of the Company had been sold under execution by the Sheriff of the County, the property bringing only two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) and that the indebtedness of the company exceeded six thousand dollars, to say nothing of the interest accumulating on the indebtedness of the company and the risk suit being brought by the creditors of the company at any time which if done would materially increase the indebtedness of the company, with a risk of swelling the indebtedness of the company to some six or seven thousand dollars beyond the company ability to pay, in which case the individual stockholders would be liable individually to pay the amounts.

On motion of Jonathan Mayhew a committee was ordered, J. D. Hines, to be one, to ascertain and report at the next meeting of stockholders, what was the personal liabilities of each stockholder and ex-stockholder of the company, when the debts of the company was contracted, the time for the report to be made was not to exceed four weeks. Carried.

The committee selected was as follows, J. D. Hines, M. Wason and Jonathan Mayhew.

On motion of Brice Grimes, the stockholders of the Farmers Canal and Water Company do hereby authorize the Trustees of said company that if they can make any arrangements with any party or parties to come forward and pay off all liabilities of said company and in consideration for said payment, the Trustees are to surrender all of the right, title and interest of the company in said stock to said person or persons, also waving all right of redemption. Carried unanimously.

On motion the meeting adjourned subject to call of the President of the Company.

The original Farmers Canal and Water Company was sold to Messrs. Wymand and Owen for \$\$600.00 on June 10, 1876.

The Stockholders of the Farmers Canal and Water Company met at the office of Hines and Brooks at 2 o'clock P.M.

Charles G. Finney, President in the chair.  
Minutes of last meeting read and approved.

The President made a financial report of the indebtedness of the company and explanations of the sale of the company stock to Messrs. Owen and Company, which on motion was accepted and ratified by the stockholders.

On motion of Brice Grimes the stockholders now ratify and confirm the sale made and that on Monday June 12, 1876 or as soon thereafter as possible, that the secretary of the company instructed to turn over all the books of the company to the purchasers. Carried unanimously.

On motion the following resolution was offered and carried: Resolved that Messrs. Wymand and Owen place in the hands of Charles G. Finney the sum of three hundred dollars of the purchase money of

*six thousand dollars of the F. C. & W. Company to hold for the purpose of buying or fighting the right of way claims and gather in all deeds now outstanding of the said company right of way, and if all the deeds are given gratis, then the said Charles G. Finney is to pay the said three hundred dollars over to the creditors of the company.*

*On motion the company adjourned.*

*Brice Grimes, Secretary*

On April 9, 1877, Orville W. Owen deeded to George H. Wyman three undivided fifth parts of the Farmers Canal and Water Company, consideration not mentioned.

On August 17, 1878 George H. Wyman conveyed to M. Steward, John F. Cummings, M. D. L. Todd, G. G. Sewell, R. Atmore, J. H. McCutcheon and R. H. Omstead a deed to three undivided fifth parts of the Farmers Canal and Water Company for the sum of \$600.00.

On November 16, 1878, Orville W. Owen sold the remaining two-fifths of the company to the above named men for \$383.00.

From 1878 to 1886 the Farmers Ditch was owned and operated by a group of men residing in Santa Paula-Briggs area. During this 8 year period there were numerous transfers of title to part ownership of the Farmers Ditch. The deeds conveying part ownership read as follows: Words of conveyance: Grant, bargain and sell, convey and confirm, one undivided twentieth (1/20) part in common of all that certain property and franchise, etc. The consideration for 1/20 of the ditch and water rights varied from \$150 to \$250.00. There were a number of deeds recorded which conveyed 1/40 part of the Canal property and franchise.

Records of operation are not available for the period 1878 to 1886.

In February 1886 a new corporation was formed under the name of The Farmers Water Company. The capital stock of this corporation was \$12,500.00, divided into 125 shares, par value \$100.00 each.

Minutes of first meeting of Farmers Water Company, Briggs School House — Feb. 2, 1886.

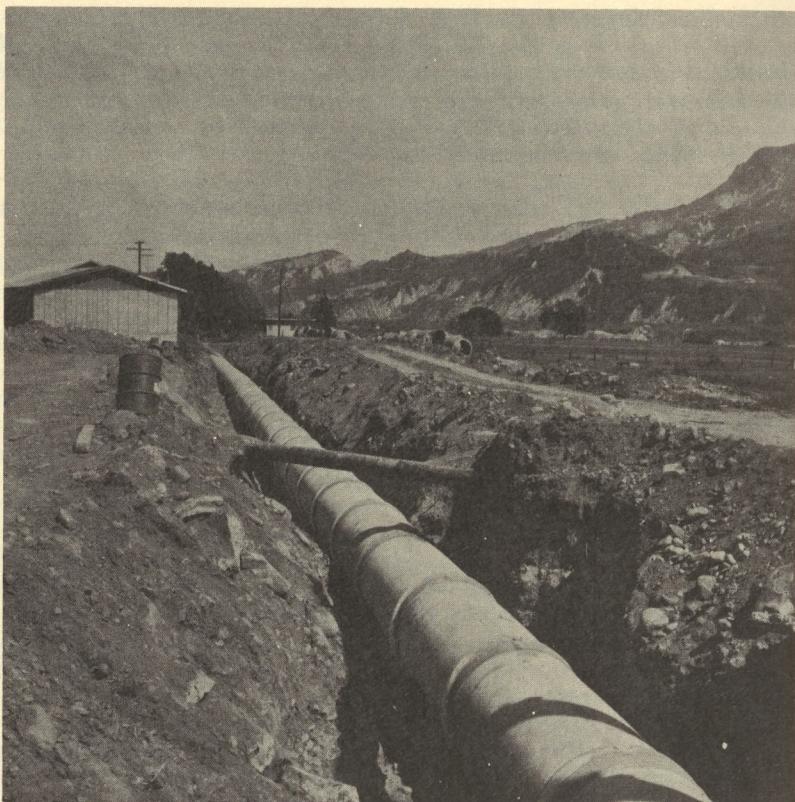
*In accordance with previous notice the Farmers Canal and Water Company met and after due consideration it was thought best to organize a new company and have it incorporated under the laws of the State. On motion the new company was called The Farmers Water Company.*

*On motion a committee was appointed to see Blackstock and Shepard and have them draw up proper incorporation papers. After some other business pertaining to the Farmers Canal and Water Co. the meeting adjourned.*

*G. W. Faulkner, Secy.*

The first Board of Directors and officers of the Farmers Water elected at a meeting held Feb. 9, 1886 were:

Welcome Fowler, President, Abner Haines, Treasurer, G. W. Faulkner, Secretary, R. H. Olmstead and J. L. Crane, Directors.



Modernization of the Farmers Ditch, 1920

Revenues from sale of water must have been low during the period the ditch was operated by the Farmers Water Company. A total of nine assessments were made between May 1886 and May 1891. Assessments varied from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per share, the total amounting to \$70.00. Minutes of Directors meetings show the assessment money was used to clean the ditch and maintain flumes at barranca crossings.

The continual expense of cleaning the ditch, evidently caused the Board of Directors to consider asphalt and cement linings.

*Briggs School House  
May 1, 1888*

*Pursuant to call of the President the Directors met. Present S. R. Thorpe, M. D. L. Todd, R. H. Olmstead, Abner Haines and G. W. Faulkner.*

*The committee of inquiry reported as follows: Mr. S. R. Thorpe*

having been to Santa Barbara to investigate into the merits of asphaltum as a material for making a ditch, found the plan not feasible. Mr. Guy Goodrich came by invitation to Santa Paula and in company with Abner Haines, R. H. Olmstead and G. W. Faulkner looked over the ditch, after due consideration Mr. Goodrich said he would make a ditch 2 feet wide on the bottom, 4 feet wide on the top and 3 feet deep, cement the sides  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick and the bottom 1 inch thick for 75 cents per linear foot.

On motion the report of the committee was received and the committee discharged.

On motion the superintendent was instructed to procure a crew of men and clean out the ditch and put it in order for use. No further business coming up the meeting was adjourned to meet May 15th, 1888 at the Briggs School House.

The length of the ditch maintained and used by the Farmers Water Co. is not known. Careful reading of recorded minutes of all meetings held by the company indicate Ellsworth Barranca was probably the westerly terminus. During the later part of period the ditch was operated by the Farmers Water Company several stockholders surrendered their stock in lieu of paying assessments. This action by some of the stockholders probably accounts for the Board of Directors deciding to sell the company.

*Office of Farmers Water Company, Santa Paula, Ventura County, California. April 19, 1893.*

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Farmers Water Co. having been expressly called by the President and all the Directors being present, to-wit: Abner Haines, M. D. L. Todd, E. M. Cleveland, O. C. Carl and G. W. Faulkner.

A motion made to open the ditch from the river to the Todd barranca, after considerable discussion was put and voted down.

A motion was then made to elect a committee of three to negotiate the sale of the Farmers Water Company's property, said motion was carried unanimously.

Abner Haines, M. D. L. Todd and G. W. Faulkner were duly elected to serve on said committee.

On motion meeting adjourned to meet at call of the President.  
G. W. Faulkner, Secy.

The committee found a buyer and the sale was completed at the Board meeting held May 2, 1893.

The Farmers Water Company property and water rights were sold to Addison Lysle of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and William J. Sheriff of Ventura on May 2, 1893 for \$150.00.

The Farmers Water Company property was purchased by Lysle and Sheriff for the Keystone Mining, Manufacturing, Land and Power Company, a California Corporation, financed by Pittsburgh Investment

Bankers. Addison Lysle must have been a visionary man. Mr. Nichols told me the Keystone Company planned to enlarge the Farmers Ditch and use barges to transport crops produced in the Santa Clara Valley to Ventura. Records of operation by the Keystone Company are not available. The Keystone Company was sold to the Farmers Ditch Irrigating Company on March 8, 1899 for \$5,000.00.

The Farmers Ditch Irrigating Company was organized by Mrs. Clarise H. Harrold. Mrs. Harrold owned the property known as the Olivelands. The Farmers Ditch Irrigating Company was sold to Leopoldo Schiappa Pietra in 1904 for the sum of \$10.00 with a reservation and agreement which called for 200 miners inches of Farmers Ditch water to be delivered on demand in perpetuity free of charge at the Olivelands Pumping Plant. The reservation of 200 miners inches of free water resulted in extended litigation and was declared void by the United States Supreme Court.

Leopoldo Schiappa Pietra deeded the Farmers Ditch and Water Rights to the Santa Clara Water and Irrigating Company and owned a large amount of land in the Rancho Santa Clara Del Norte served by the Water Company. It was said Schiappa Pietra purchased the Farmers Ditch in order to protect and improve the water rights held by the Santa Clara Water and Irrigating Company to divert and use the surface flow of the Santa Clara River.

All improvements made to the Farmers Ditch, during the time it was owned by the Santa Clara Water and Irrigating Co., were installed in such a way as to limit its capacity to less than 1000 miners inches of water. The limitation of capacity of the Farmers Ditch left more water in the Santa Clara River at the point of South Mountain for diversion and use on the Rancho Santa Clara Del Norte.

The capacity limitation, nullification of contract calling for delivery of 200 miners inches of water at the Olivelands Pumping plant free of charge, and poor service rendered by the Santa Clara Water and Irrigating Company are some of the reasons the Farmers Irrigation Company was incorporated and the Farmers Ditch and Water Rights purchased in 1917 for \$66,000.00.

In the spring of 1918 the Farmers Irrigation Company embarked on an improvement program which called for the installation of approximately 7.5 miles of reinforced concrete pipe at a cost of more than \$300,000.00. In 1922 the surface flow of the river started to fail and since that time eleven deep wells have been drilled and equipped with turbine pumps to augment the river surface flow and improve the quality of water delivered. The investment in wells and pumps is more than \$150,000.

The Farmers Irrigation Company pipe line terminates at the Gill Reservoir, located south of the intersection of Telegraph and Wells Roads.

Incumbent Directors, elected and appointed officers of Farmers Irrigation Company are:

M. M. Teague, President; A. C. Hardison, 1st Vice President; Robert A. Hardison, 2nd Vice President; G. A. Quick, Secretary and Treasurer; Eliot M. Blanchard; V. M. Freeman; G. I. Wilde, Manager and Engineer; Perry Abbott, Superintendent.

The Farmers Irrigation Company serves approximately 5000 acres of highly developed agricultural lands. Its facilities provide a supply of 1800 miners inches of water, and its customers have never experienced a shortage of water.

Attention is called to the following facts:

In 1873, State Franchise and County property taxes were low, labor was paid less than 20c per hour on construction work, land sold for less than \$100.00 per acre, and the charge for irrigation water delivered from the Farmers Ditch was 25c per 24 hour miners inch.

In 1963, State Franchise and County property taxes are high and State and Federal income taxes are paid, labor is paid more than \$2.00 per hour on construction work, land is selling for 8 to 12 thousand dollars per acre and the charge for irrigation water delivered from the Farmers Ditch is 32 cents per 24 hour miners inch.

Today irrigation water is delivered from the Farmers Ditch for only 7 cents more per 24 hour miners inch than was charged 90 years ago.

The Farmers Irrigation Company, a privately owned Public Utility is doing a darned good job.

## *Membership*

LIFE	SUSTAINING
Philip Bard	Richard Bard
Mrs. Edith Hoffman	Roger Edwards
Mrs. Grace Smith	A. C. Hardison
Mrs. Robert G. Haley	Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague
Walter Wm. Hoffman	Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells
John P. Thille	
Grace S. Thille	
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard	
Mrs. E. C. Canet	
Henry M. Borchard	
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan	
Mrs. May H. Norcop	
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds	
Mrs. Myrtle K. Dudley	

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

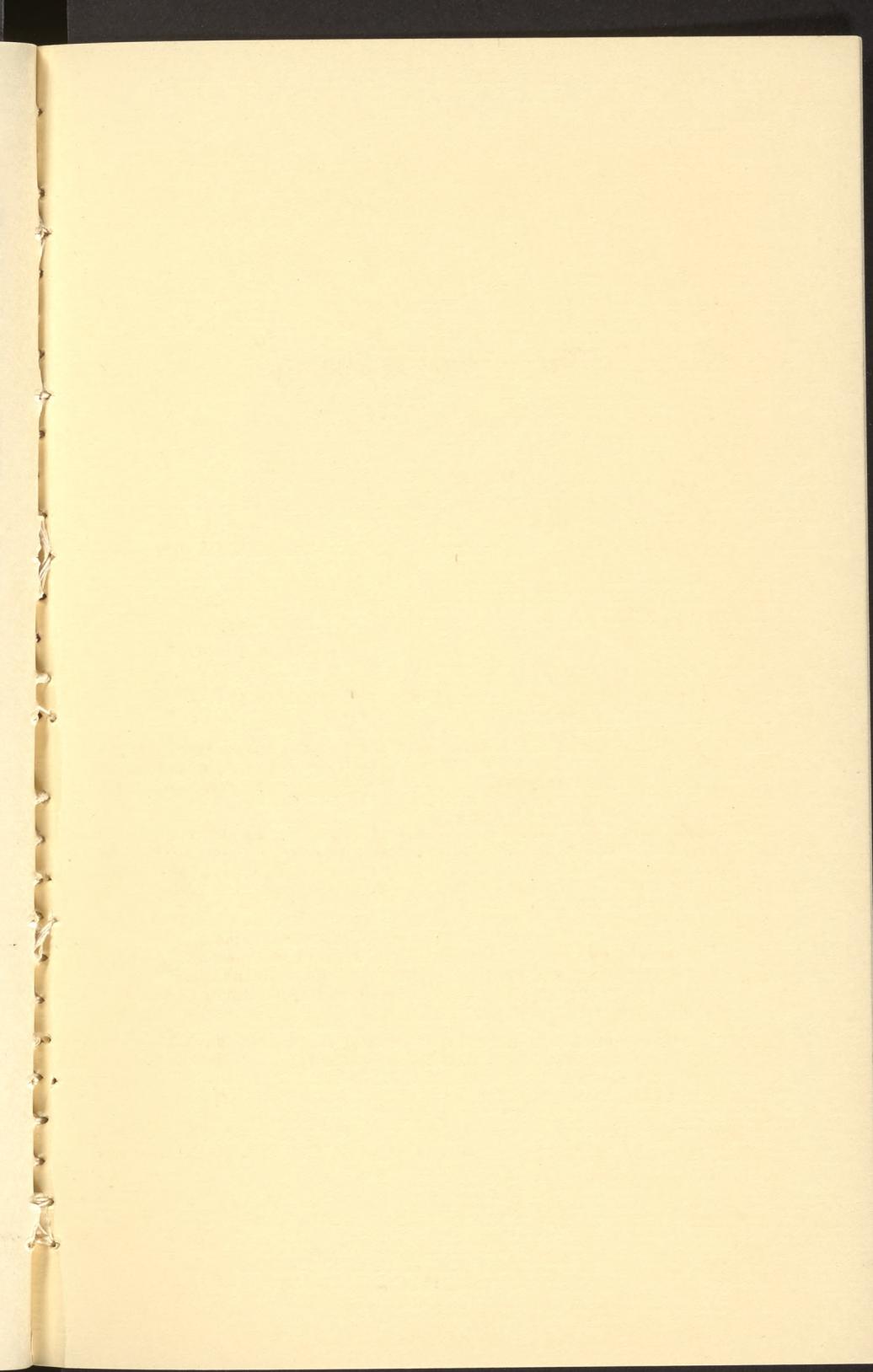
*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

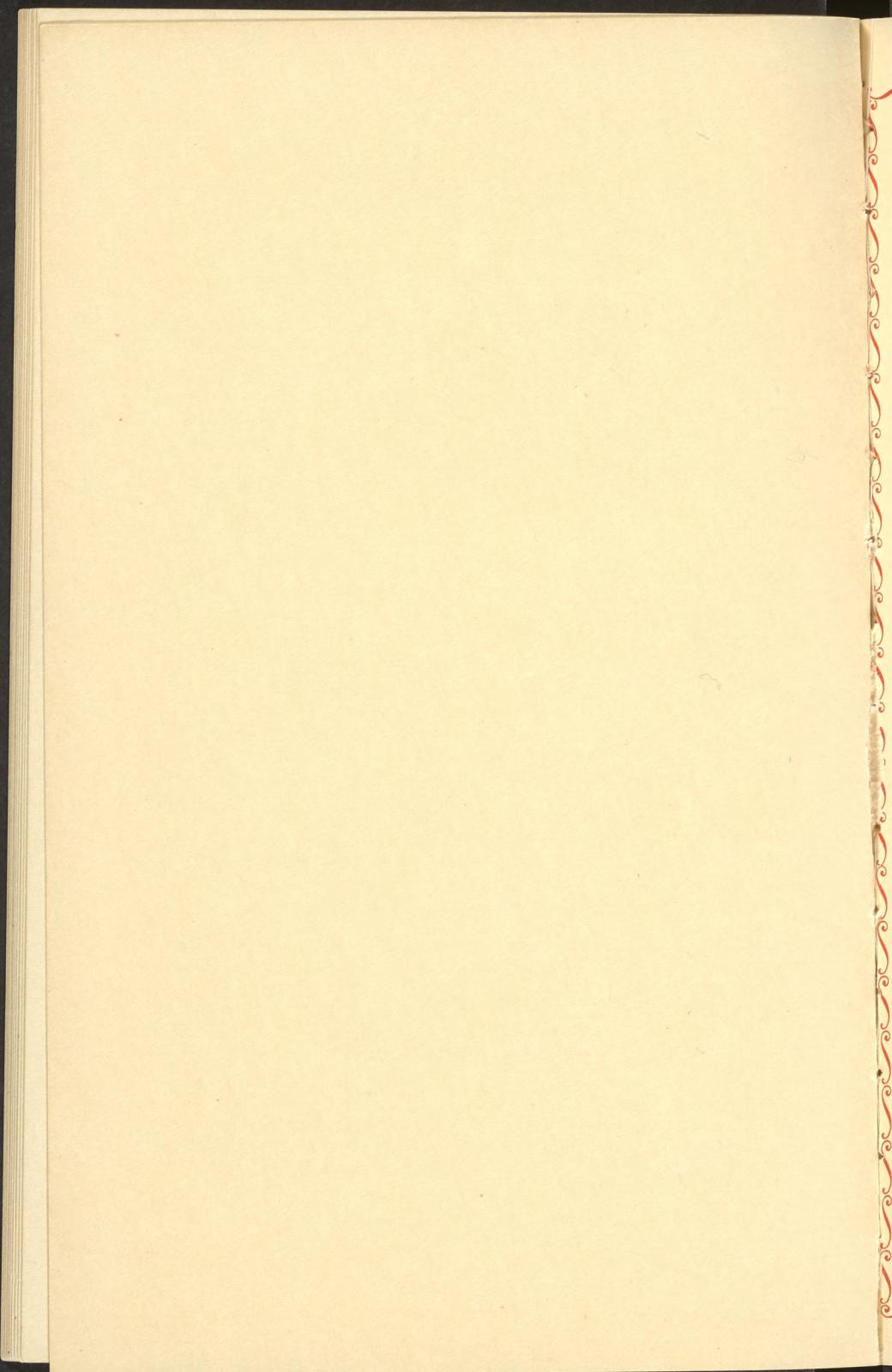
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

*Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.







VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

May 1963

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

The Ventura County  
Historical Society Quarterly

VOL. VIII, No. 3

MAY, 1963

C O N T E N T S

*Early Day Banks and  
Banking In Ventura County*



A. Levy

## *Early Day Banks and Banking In Ventura County*

F. L. Fairbanks

I believe that I am the only ex-banker still living who was one of the officers of a Ventura County bank in the last century. I left college to take a position in the Bank of Hueneme on May 16, 1895, and continued to work there until early in November, 1906, the last six years as cashier.

Banking was a much different thing from what you will find now; no typewriters, no adding machines, and strangest of all, no currency—at least very little.

The first bank to be organized in the county was the Bank of Ventura, in September, 1874. I believe Thomas R. Bard was the first president and Larkin Snodgrass the second. At that time the former was at the head of the County Assessment Roll, and was the leading figure in practically all county matters. The latter was the grandfather of our friend Fred Snodgrass. The fly that Fred dropped when he was playing with the New York Giants in the World Series created more excitement than a run on a bank, I am sure. When I entered High School in Ventura in August, 1891, E. P. Foster was president, A. Bernheim vice-president, and Henry Clay cashier. (The latter was a grandfather of Jim Hollingsworth). In addition to being the bank cashier Henry Clay was County Treasurer from 1893 to 1902. Others working in the bank at that time were John A. Walker and Hyde Chaffee.

The only other bank in Ventura at that time was the Bank of William Collins & Sons. They were affiliated with California Bank, of Oakland, also owned by the Collins family. The Collins bank at Ventura was opened for business in the Fall of 1887. It was managed by J. S. Collins, Jack Collins as he was usually called. He was for several years Mayor of Ventura. Jack Morrison (not our Jack of Museum fame) was assistant cashier and Charley McDonnell was bookkeeper.

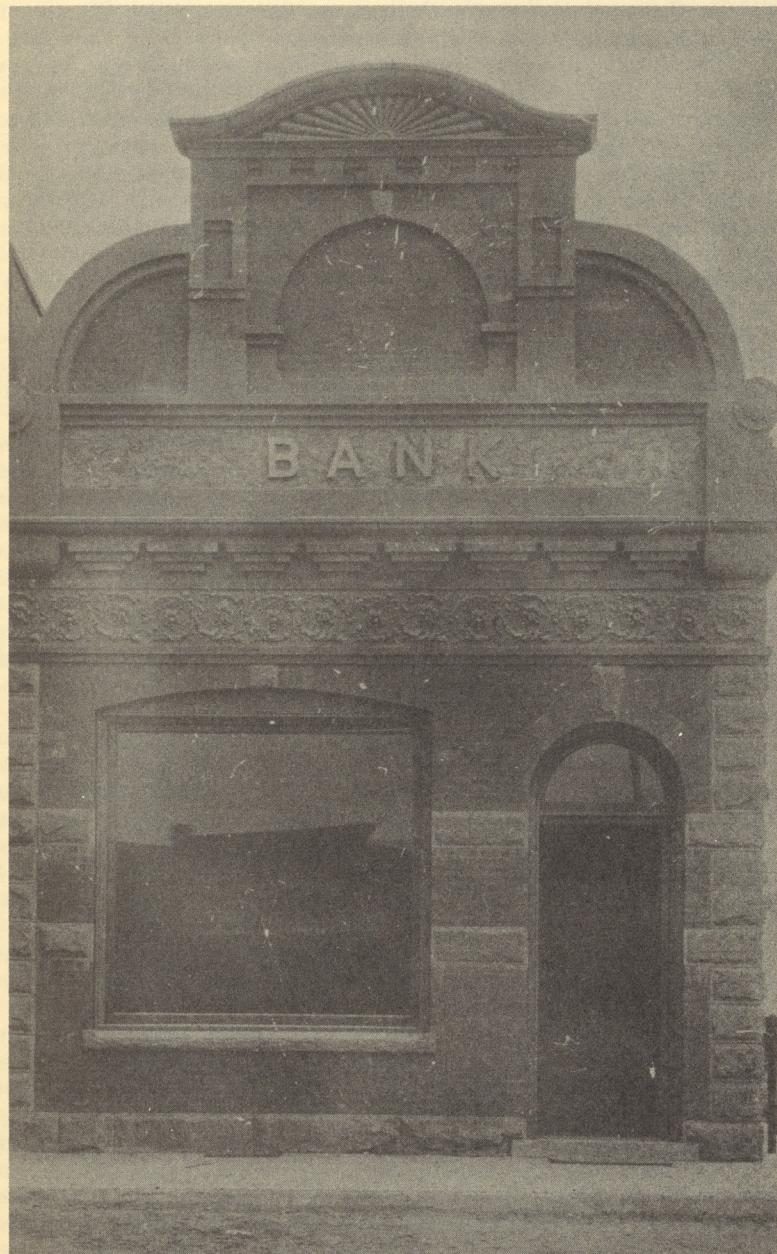
The bank at Santa Paula was organized and opened in 1889. It was shortly changed from a State Bank, and became the first National Bank to be opened in the county, under the name First National Bank of Santa Paula. The first president was a Los Angeles banker, G. H. Bonebrake, but he was soon replaced by C. H. McKeveitt, long a leader in Santa Paula business affairs. Mr. McKeveitt had some banking experience before he came to California. The first cashier was Maj. J. R. Haugh, with Harry Youngken as bookkeeper. Later A. L. Shively took Youngken's place in the Bank. He was a good friend of mine, so one day I asked Mr. McKeveitt how Shively was getting along in the bank. He replied jocularly, "It's like this: Harry is about one and a half times as fast as Shively, and Shively is about one and a half times as accurate as Youngken."

The Bank of Hueneme was organized in 1889, with Thomas R. Bard as president, A. Levy as vice-president, Maj. Thomas J. Gregg as cashier, and D. T. Perkins as secretary. Other directors were A. J. Salisbury, M. L. Wolff and A. Bernheim. Of these Bard and Perkins both served as Supervisors of the county, at different times. Maj. Gregg was retired from the regular army on account of heart trouble, from which he died shortly. He had been an expert pistol shot while in the army, so about the first thing he did with me was to take a revolver belonging to the bank and hand it to me, with instructions to start practicing with it. I suppose that if he had lived longer I might have been able eventually to hit the side of a barn, as the saying is.

Maj. Gregg was the possessor of something that I was always interested in, a hickory cane, cut from a tree by President Andrew Jackson, polished beautifully and capped with a gold head bearing an inscription about like this: "Presented to my friend General McMurfree by Andrew Jackson." It was always kept in the bank vault. I have often wondered what became of this cane after the Major's death. He had no sons. His second daughter married a German officer in Washington, D.C., and later they went to Germany to live. I have been told that two of their sons were in the German army, fighting against the United States, but can't vouch for the truth of it. I hope, for the Major's sake, that it was not so. Many of his family were army men, and he had been attached at different times to most of the U. S. Army Posts in the West when the Indians were keeping things so hot.

When the American Beet Sugar Company (later American Crystal Sugar Company) built their factory in Oxnard, I drove out, at their request, on their first pay day with the necessary funds to cash the checks. However, it was only a short time until the Bank of Oxnard, later First National Bank of Oxnard, was organized with Henry T. Oxnard as the first president. That was probably about 1900. The first cashier was Jay Spence, and the first assistant cashier was Fred H. Thatcher, both former employees of First National Bank of Pomona, the bank which cared for the sugar factory at Chino. Jay Spence was very methodical in his way of keeping records. Every day the bank recorded the number of deposits, the total amount deposited, and the average amount of each deposit, likewise the number of checks cashed, the total amount of all, and the average amount. This was done by the day, week, month and year.

After J. M. Elliott, the then president of the First National Bank of Los Angeles, died, the man chosen to take his place, whose name was Stoddard Jess, was the then president of First National Bank of Pomona. I was discussing with him one day the way the First National Bank of Oxnard kept this accounting, and asked if this was their habit in accounting in the Bank at Pomona when he was president. He exploded, and said, "No one but Jay Spence ever did that." Spence afterward left Oxnard to take the position of cashier in a new bank being organized in Los Angeles, which was named Metropolitan Bank



Bank of Hueneme

& Trust Company, and was with them, or their successor, for the rest of his banking career as a vice-president.

When Jay Spence resigned as president of the First National Bank of Oxnard, J. A. Donlon, usually referred to as "Big Jim" to distinguish him from his cousin, "Little Jim", resigned his office as Ventura County Assessor which he had held for twenty years, and was elected president of the bank, holding the office as long as he lived. Although he was a Democrat and the county was normally Republican, Donlon had no difficulty in being elected Assessor regularly. In those days the State derived most of its income from taxes on realty. While the Assessor fixed values, his figures were always subject to review by the State Board of Equalization. Donlon was brought up near Dublin in Alameda County, near the home of L. C. Morehouse of San Leandro, chairman for 16 years of State Board of Equalization, and a lifelong friend of Donlon. After Donlon ceased to be the Assessor county values went up and eventually were almost doubled.

When I first started to work for Bank of Hueneme there were four Bank Commissioners in California, whose job it was to look after the State Banks regularly and see that they were not only solvent but O.K. in every respect. These were all political appointments, men without banking experience, and many of them could not even balance the cash. About 1900 the law was changed and a Bank Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent took over the work formerly handled by the Commissioners. Fred H. Thatcher, formerly cashier of First National Bank of Oxnard, was the man first chosen as such Assistant. These men were practical bankers, and the men they sent to examine the banks knew what they were doing.

One of the early Commissioners was "Barney" Murphy, Democratic "boss" of Santa Clara County. It seems to me he was appointed by Governor "Jim" Budd. He came into the Bank of Hueneme one day to examine the bank, and as I had seen some comments in the newspapers about Murphy being a candidate for Governor of California, I tried quizzing him a bit. He was an interesting man, very old-fashioned in his dress and behavior, and I enjoyed talking to him. "Who are the Democrats going to run for Governor, Mr. Murphy", I asked him. He wrapped his long coat around himself, and said, "There are a great many patriots willing to sacrifice themselves on the altars of their Country".

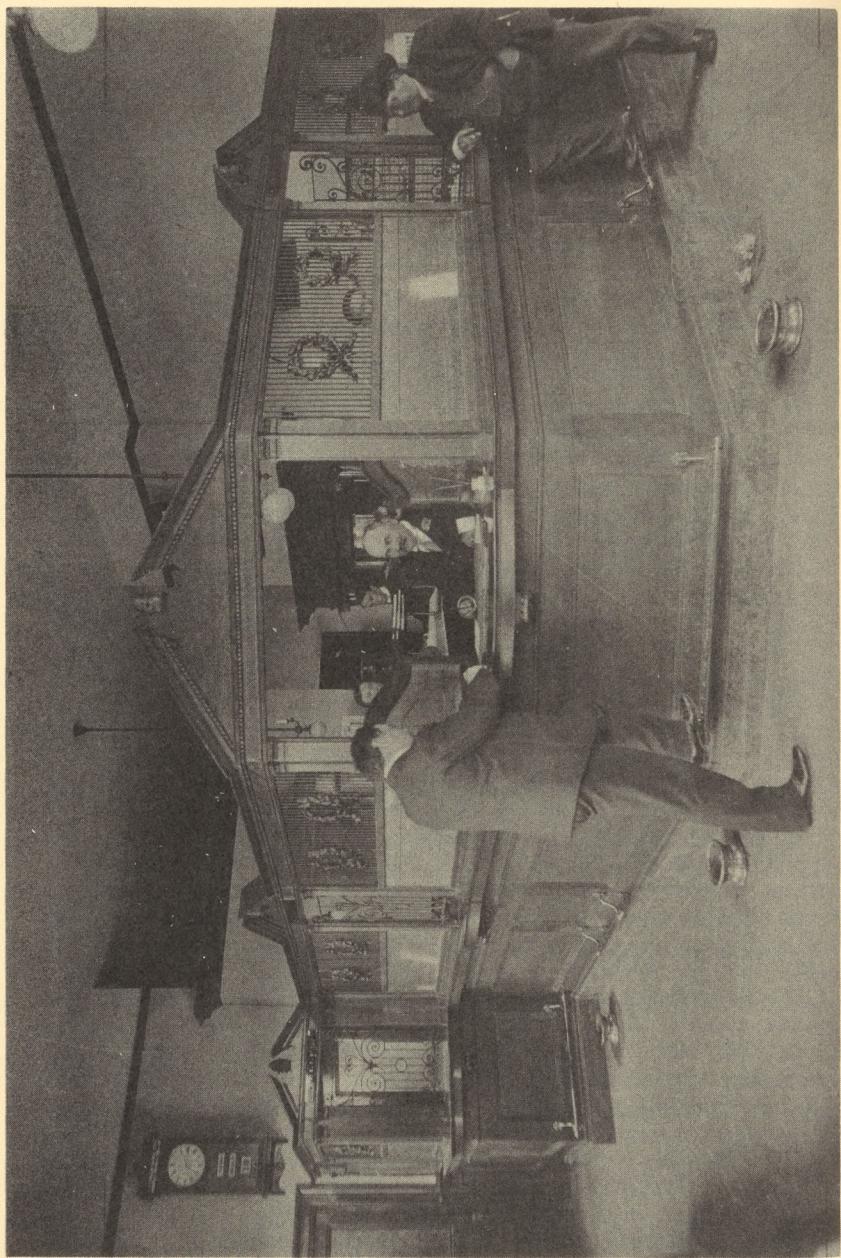
The first typewriter I ever saw was owned by Ed M. Selby, father of Wm. T. Selby of Ventura. Ed graduated from Ventura High School in 1892. Shortly before that occasion he had rented a room upstairs over Collins Bank and had begun to type legal papers for various lawyers, of whom his father, Lloyd Selby, was one. He had no trouble keeping busy, as I doubt if any of the legal fraternity had a machine. Mr. Lloyd Selby was a very fine man. After I graduated from high school I took the teachers examination given by the County Board of Education and passed it without any

trouble although I was never a teacher. Mr. Selby, one of the Board, asked me, "What are you going to do now that you are out of high school?" "Well," I said, "Charlie Blackstock and I have decided that we'll be partners as lawyers when we settle down to our life work." Although he was an attorney of standing, he said, "I don't see why anyone would wish to become a lawyer. The District Attorney of this County is paid only \$1,500 a year and there isn't an attorney in Ventura who wouldn't take the job if offered." However, his son and grandson both became successful attorneys, both practicing in Ventura County. The offices where they did not have typewriters at that time used a press and a damp rag to get their copies, often very unsatisfactory. It was rather a dirty job, too.

I became cashier of Bank of Hueneme on the first of January, 1901, and personally bought a typewriter for my own use. The directors evidently thought that if we had put up with a copy of Major Gregg's unreadable handwriting for so long we could manage. Occasionally someone would return one of the Major's letters and ask him to please say in a good round hand what the letter was about. He usually brought the letter to me then for translation. However, the directors did allow me to buy a Burroughs adding machine for the bank shortly thereafter, when they came into use. I almost lost faith in it one afternoon when, in balancing the cash, the total was nine cents off. We got along without a telephone, too. There were only four or five in town. Ventura had fewer than a hundred phones then.

When I first went to work at the Bank my instructions were to pay out half silver and half gold when checks were presented for payment. The Government was "pushing" silver at that time and would pay express charges from San Francisco (or other cities where there were sub-treasuries) to any point in the United States. All you had to do was to have your correspondent bank in San Francisco deposit \$1,000 in gold at the sub-treasury and they would ship a like amount in silver. As we practically never had any cash deposited in the bank, it saved us money to use all of the silver we could. At that time people in California were not accustomed to currency, and would not take it unless compelled to.

Occasionally I had a hard time getting people to take any appreciable amount of silver. One of my worst experiences—and a joke on me—was with "Parson" Wood, as he was called by everyone. He was a character, and always a good subject for a discussion. He was a Baptist minister, personally owned the only church at Springville, and likewise owned the cemetery adjoining the church. Rumor had it that if he didn't like you he would appreciate your not going to his church; furthermore, that if he didn't like you he would not permit you to be buried in his cemetery. He came in one day to cash a check. It was over \$1,000, possibly around \$1,400. I handed him half of the amount in silver, and the other half in gold, as per my



orders. The gold suited him, but he argued with me a long time about the silver. It would weigh probably over thirty pounds. He said finally that he had been thinking for a long time that he ought to open a checking account with us, and this was a good chance. He kept the gold, but asked me to fix up a check and passbook for him. I fixed up a signature card and a combination check and passbook, and he left the silver—and immediately walked across the street and checked it all out.

At that time A. Levy was not classed as a regular banker. He was practically forced into being a banker, as he was carrying a good share of the farmers in the Valley. The law was such at that time that anyone could act as a banker without getting a charter. Regularly we were given checks drawn on A. Levy, on M. L. Wolff, on A. Bernheim & Co., Simon Cohn and others. If one of these agreed to carry a man until his crop was harvested, instead of giving him the full amount at the time, he was given a checkbook. They usually had a verbal agreement as to what the man could draw on his banker for—not just anything, but something to keep going until harvest time. In the "barley" days, if it was a dry year, the debt was carried over. I remember Henry Mahan, a Simi rancher, telling me one day that he was raising barley in the Simi in the late nineties when we were having some very dry years, and he ran behind until he owed \$45,000. The next year he had an excellent crop of what was classed as good "brewing" barley, and sold it for enough to pay his debts and buy a ranch with what was left. There were many who had the same experience in the "barley" days.

A. Levy was vice-president of Bank of Hueneme, and from the time that he started to ship beans out of California, we collected a large share of the amounts due him. He would draw a draft which would be attached to a bill of lading, and give to us. We would choose a bank in the city where the payee had his business, and advise them to collect and remit the money to J. P. Morgan & Co., in New York. New York exchange sold at a profit a good share of the year, and in addition to that, New York banks paid two per cent on daily balances. We allowed Levy to draw against the amount. While we charged nine per cent per annum, payable monthly, on overdrafts of any size, you can be sure that Levy was saving money or he would not have done it. I think his credit was such that he could have had anything he wanted from London, Paris, and American Bank, Ltd., in San Francisco, his correspondent bank.

An overdraft in a bank today is a little like smallpox, if of any size, but there were times when our overdrafts reached more than \$50,000. We had regular printed forms for listing the daily overdrafts of each individual, and that was the first thing I did after 4 P.M., our then closing time, on the last day of the month. And don't think everyone could be sure of an overdraft. He had to be good for it.

It was not too long after the panic of 1893 when I went to work for Bank of Hueneme. Major Gregg told me after I went to work there,

that while the Bank of Hueneme had arranged for an overdraft in six figures with Farmers & Merchants Bank of Los Angeles, that in 1893 when "all hell broke loose", the first thing the bank received the following morning was a telegram saying, "Do not use your overdraft." All Ventura County banks went through that trying time with safety, although it is likely that not all of their officers slept well.

While Fred Thatcher was assistant cashier (and later, cashier) of the First National Bank of Oxnard, he organized an orchestra at his own expense. This was a fine thing for Oxnard as it was a pretty tough town on the start, and he put on a good evening's entertainment. He could play almost any instrument. I happened to be in San Francisco after Fred went to work for the State Banking Department, and after taking me to lunch one day he asked me to be his guest at the old Tivoli Opera House, where "Carmen" was the opera on in the afternoon. I remember that Collamorena was Carmen. She weighed about 200, I think, while the tenor making love to her weighed about 120. I heard Calve' at the old Hazard's Pavilion in Los Angeles shortly before as Carmen, and I preferred her to Calve' in the title role. I suppose this old Opera House burned up in 1906, and of course Hazard's Pavilion became a thing of the past long ago. Fred Thatcher lost his sight several years before he died, and departed this life several years ago at a good old age.

If my memory serves me correctly it was in 1903 that the American Bankers Association met in San Francisco, and I went up (at my own expense.) The local bankers had made preparations to do everything possible to give us a good time. The nicest thing that happened to me was a guest card for the Bohemian Club, good for two weeks. James J. Fagan was the banker to whom I was indebted for entrance to the Bohemian Club. The first thing I saw on the walls there, was a picture of Al Gerberding, a brother of Mrs. Thomas R. Bard. One of the members of the club told me that he was the best-loved man in the club. Al Gerberding was a brother of Fred and Otto Gerberding. At one time he was raising sheep in the Simi in partnership with Thomas R. Bard, D. T. Perkins, "Pap" Smith and a few others. When he went to San Francisco he became the head of the grain exchange, I believe (They all lost their shirts, so to speak, in that sheep-raising time, after first making big money.)

E. P. Foster was another County banker who raised sheep in Conejo. Chas. Barnard, who started the first Title Company in Ventura County, told me once that he camped nights about a block from the present site of my office in Fillmore with his sheep around him.

In the nineties there were many banks in San Francisco that later either went out of business or were merged with other banks who wanted to acquire age by such merger with a bank which dated back to the days of gold. There was Donohoe-Kelly Banking Company, Sather Banking Company, London & San Francisco Bank, Ltd., Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, and many others. The Nevada Bank

was the San Francisco correspondent of Bank of Hueneme, and I had to draw almost daily to cover checks drawn on us and which the Clearing House would not handle. I. W. Hellman was their president at the time I first went into the bank. Soon after that time the Chicago banks started to follow New York custom and pay 2% on daily balances, and while in San Francisco I called on Mr. Hellman to try to get Nevada to pay us 2% on daily balances, following Chicago's move. L. C. Morehouse, my uncle by marriage, was president of two banks in San Leandro, and he said he would like to go in and get a look at Hellman, so we went together. He tried to persuade us that his bank was so much stronger than any other bank in the State that we were better off there without the 2% than with a bank less strong and the 2%. From the time that Hellman saved the Union Pacific Railroad, he was a power in San Francisco and in fact in the whole State.

In the latter part of 1907 and the early part of 1908 there occurred what was referred to as the money panic. I was at that time cashier of Fillmore State Bank, and banking conditions were pretty frightening. Ventura County banks were well organized and decided to use scrip in lieu of cash, as was being done in many places. Some of our experiences were very trying, and some, later, were funny.

A young man came in to the Fillmore State Bank some time before the money panic started, and said he wanted to open a checking account. He was brought up in the mountains of Kentucky or Tennessee and had never had a bank account before. He fished out from beneath his shirt and underwear over \$1,000 in currency which he had been carrying around next to his hide and which was getting pretty smelly. I gave him a check and passbook covering the amount and somewhat later he moved to Santa Paula and went to work for the Limoneira Company, and promptly checked out his balance and opened an account with the First National Bank of Santa Paula. A. L. Shively was then cashier. When Mr. X heard that the banks were not paying real money but only scrip, he went immediately to the bank and demanded of Shively that he give him his account in real money. Shively politely but firmly told him that they would transfer his balance to any bank in the United States he would choose, but he would not give him the currency he wished. He said to Shively, "I deposited real money and you ought to give me what I deposited." Shively said, "You didn't deposit any cash with us", so the man called me up on the phone and asked me if we would give him cash—what he deposited. I said, "No, you don't have any money with us. Why should I?" After that he went out on the sidewalk in front of the First National Bank and started to cry bitterly. Of course a crowd commenced to gather, so Shively phoned to C. C. Teague, president of the bank, and suggested that it might be wise for him to come down—that one of his Limoneira men might start a run on the bank. Mr. Teague came down and promised to be personally responsible for every cent of his money and he stopped

crying and left. The man's constant saying while on the sidewalk was, "My father told me never to trust any bank."

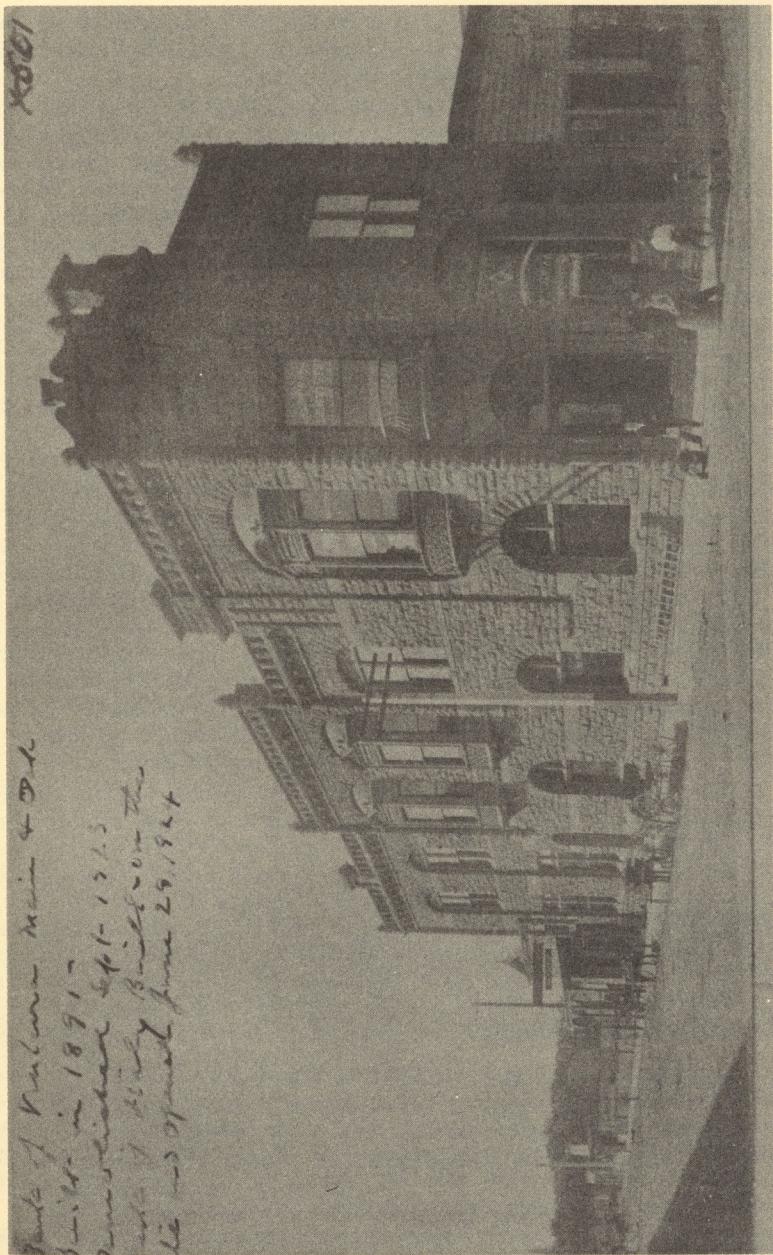
The only bank in the county to close was the Bank of Wm. Collins & Sons, which had overextended its mortgage loans. (That was before banks started to loan on deeds of trust rather than on a mortgage.) The California Bank in Oakland closed too. Those banks never opened again.

One of the most amusing things that happened to me as a bank cashier was after I took charge of Fillmore State Bank. One of our depositors was Sparr Fruit Company, buyers and shippers of oranges and lemons both in Fillmore and in Riverside. They had quite a good payroll, and one day I misread one of their checks and overpaid a man by \$30.00. I knew the man, who was said to be a dope addict. He was living at Piru, so after the bank closed I drove to Piru and found that he had bought a ticket to Los Angeles and was going to catch a train that was almost due. The train stopped at Camulos on flag and one of the man's acquaintances told me he had driven on to Camulos to avoid me. I got on the train and explained to the conductor what I expected to do if he would hold the train at Camulos for about three minutes. The conductor was either sympathetic or else wanted to see the fun, so he agreed. Passengers were supposed to get aboard on the north side of the train but my man managed to get in on the other side and immediately made a break for the men's toilet, and locked himself in. As soon as the conductor located him he banged on the door and ordered him to come out. Finally he did and I grabbed him by the collar and demanded our money. He said he had spent it. I told him he was a liar and I was going to shake the money out of him. He finally gave me half of it and as the conductor couldn't hold the train any longer, I dropped off. Today that amount of money would probably not justify so much effort, but I was young then and had a lot of fun out of it, and it was money then.

One of the experiences I had while in the Bank of Hueneme was rather funny. A foreign-born man who had bought some land in the valley came in and said he wanted to open an account with us, I got out a signature card and asked him to write his name. To my surprise it seemed that he couldn't write his name, but he explained to me that everyone else who couldn't write always made a little cross, but that he would make a little round "o" for his mark, and we would know he made it. He afterward became one of the county's substantial farmers, even if he could not write his name.

I have no doubt that during the eleven years I worked for the Bank of Hueneme I wrapped up in rolls several hundred thousand silver dollars. I was always glad to see Henry Levy come in and ask for a full sack of silver—\$1,000—as he was always glad to show me how he could put that sack up over his shoulder with a straight arm. When newly minted a sack of silver weighs over fifty-eight pounds. Try it, if you think it's easy. The traveling salesmen gave him a special

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Bank of Ventura built in 1891  
and situated on Main Street  
was opened June 29, 1894

Bank of Ventura

nickname, because he worked nearly every night until about two o'clock, "Cascarets", because of the product's slogan, "They work while you sleep." But they never said it to his face.

In the late nineties and early nineteen hundreds the Santa Clara Valley was seized with a desire to improve the breed of draft horses, and a group was chosen to decide on the stallions to buy. I recall one promissory note of \$8,000 signed by possibly fifteen makers, all men of substance, of the character of the Borchards, Maulhardts, Leon Lehmann, A. Levy, Adolfo Camarillo, and many more. Even then the note would have been good for a million dollars. Our bank discounted the note as the owner wanted the cash. It was as good an investment as I ever saw taken in a bank. One of the makers died before the note was paid, and I had to get busy and secure a new note so we would not have the file a claim against the decedent's estate. Very few banks outside of the big cities retained a lawyer in those days. It put the cashier on his toes continually.

About the end of the nineties we had so many dry years that a number of banks in the State had to close their doors. N. Blackstock, of Ventura, was then one of the Bank Commissioners. He asked me if I would take charge for the State of one of the banks in San Luis Obispo County which had suffered from several dry years, but I said, "No." Ventura County has always seemed to me to be the best county in the State. The request reminded me of something I had heard at a State Bankers meeting held in San Jose. The chairman presiding was asking for reports from different parts of the State as to local conditions. A bank cashier from San Luis Obispo was asked and replied, "What San Luis Obispo needs more than anything else is a few first class funerals." I never heard what happened to him when he went home.

One of the exciting things I saw in the late nineties was a gathering around the office of A. Levy, across the street from Bank of Hueneme. A. Levy was a big shipper of lima beans at that time. He was the first person to ship a trainload of limas East. I recall a large photo on the walls of the old office in Hueneme with a banner on each car stating that this trainload of beans was being shipped by A. Levy, of Hueneme. Well, it seems that the Southern Pacific Railroad had aroused the anger of Levy and he had shifted all of his shipments to the Santa Fe. All of the "Big Brass" from the S. P. was gathered around the office for a whole day trying to mollify Levy. They finally came to some agreement.

Jack Collins, cashier of the Bank of Wm. Collins & Sons, was never known to get excited. I recall one instance which happened when I was cashier of Bank of Hueneme. For some reason he wanted to go to Point Mugu (or as it was spelled then, *Magu*.) There was no road to the Point except at low tide. He picked the wrong time of day to take his wife and several others, of whom I was one, to the Point in a spring wagon. As he drove along where the road was supposed to be, his spring wagon dropped and all of us had our feet in the water. He

went ahead in spite of his wife's screams, without stopping the horses. I have no doubt he was just as calm during scrip days.

There were very few payrolls around Hueneme then. Hueneme Wharf Company probably had the largest, at least in the summer. My father took charge of the wharf and warehouse in April, 1881, and worked for them until he retired—or until they retired, I suppose I should say. He had just finished bossing a crew of men who had built a wharf on Santa Rosa Island, then owned by More Bros., of Santa Barbara, before taking the job at Hueneme. He was the only salaried worker among the men working in the warehouses or on the wharf. All the others were paid by the day, \$2.00 for a 10-hour day. I think all of the stores allowed charge accounts. Several of them carried barrels of liquor and when a man paid a bill of any size he was given a drink, if he wanted one. There was no license required then.

There were quite a number of Chinese men in and around Hueneme. There was always at least one as cook on a threshing machine. The Bard family always had three, usually of the Soo Hoo family. D. T. Perkins always had one, and so did Major Gregg and Tom Rice. Probably many other families did. Tom Yee, who worked for the Rice family, always wore a bone casing over his little finger and let his nail grow out until it might be almost two inches long. It seems that this was an old custom in China, and was to indicate that you didn't have to work. Some of these men had accounts with us, but ordinarily they carried it in cash. Wong Ah Gow was a farmer, and we sometimes loaned him \$2,000 or \$3,000 on a crop mortgage. We never lost any money on any of them.

A man whom every banker in California knew was Geo. N. O'Brien, who represented Union Lithograph Company, of San Francisco. Most banks I knew of bought their office supplies from them, and George was always welcomed as he was a sort of encyclopaedia. He quit about the turn of the century and took a position as cashier of a new bank just being organized by P. E. Bowles, the American National Bank. Bowles was interested in a bank in Oakland, also.

When I first went to work for Bank of Hueneme, the Nevada Bank, the Bank of California, Crocker-Woolworth Bank, First National Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, and San Francisco Savings Union were among the leading banks in San Francisco and were usually well represented at any State Bankers meeting. Mergers and other changes have been so regular that these names seem strange now.

At that time branch banks were not permitted in the United States, although they had existed in Canada for a number of years. With the coming of the Federal Reserve Bank and the branch banks, conditions changed so much that I am afraid I would be lost in a bank if I were employed by one.

When Oxnard first started to grow, the nearest and only possible schoolhouse was a one-room affair; and as buildings were being moved in every day something had to be done. I think the District was called

Santa Clara. Their three trustees came in one day and tried to persuade Major Gregg to loan them \$5,000 with which to build on another room for the school. I think the three were Justin Petit, Louis Pfeiler and G. E. Kaltmeyer, any one of them good for the loan, but they had not stopped to figure out how they were going to get their money back.

When I went to work for Fillmore State Bank in 1907, Felix W. Ewing, a former Superior Court Judge, was the bank's president. He had stated to me that they needed a new bank cashier to wake the town up—it was nearly dead. I told him that I would not take the job and attempt to wake the dead unless the bank would back me in getting a newspaper started at once. The Judge didn't take very kindly to the idea. I think he believed I was going to ask him to furnish the money with which to start it, but I assured him that it was only moral support I needed. Well, he gave in then and the Fillmore Herald was started in three months—and it is still going.

While the Ventura papers gave George Tighe credit for starting the Fillmore State Bank, it had been organized and going more than two years before he would buy any stock in the bank or even open an account in it. Eventually he became president and after the bank was sold to Bank of Italy, or Bank of America he became a vice-president.

Judge Ewing always came out to see me on Saturday morning, as he was president of First National Bank of Ventura and their affiliate, Home Savings Bank, also Ojai State Bank, all of them now merged. He usually spent about a half hour going over the books, then paced the floor in the Director's room, all the while talking to himself. I don't know yet what he talked about. One day when we were approaching the time of the "money panic", he had been scolding me because I hadn't been able to call in some overdue notes. During the morning I saw one of the men in the street and went out to get him, as Judge Ewing wanted to talk to him. The Judge gave him something of a "roasting" but wound up by loaning him another \$500. He was a cattleman and I guessed what would happen, but it cleaned my skirts.

As Judge Ewing wanted to "wake things up" in Fillmore, one of the first things to do that year was to get a Chamber of Commerce organized, but I had to accept the presidency. Two years later we had a High School, and for the first twenty-seven years I was a member of the board. (During my stay in the Bank of Hueneme I had been for three years a member of the Oxnard Union High School Board of Trustees, so I have given thirty years of my life to school work.) I think it paid in many ways, personally, although not financially.

One of our leading citizens in Fillmore was E. A. Pyle. He became a stockholder shortly after I took charge, and was anxious to be a director, but the stockholders didn't want him seemingly. However, he bided his time and before the next annual meeting went around collecting proxies without telling what he wanted them for, then cumulated his shares and as he had more than one-seventh of the stock he elected himself. The directors wanted me to figure out

a way to stop him but I told them that if he had over one-seventh of the stock they couldn't. I doubt if there has ever been a case like that in Ventura County since then.

After you have been in a bank a few years you think you have seen everything, but it is never so. About the year 1900 there was a big fire on a northbound Southern Pacific train. Three mail cars were burned up completely. It happened that we had checks being forwarded to San Francisco on that train, and it took me probably two months to get our money. Every bank in San Francisco had a different rule, some of them refusing to pay duplicate checks, and any other number of reasons.

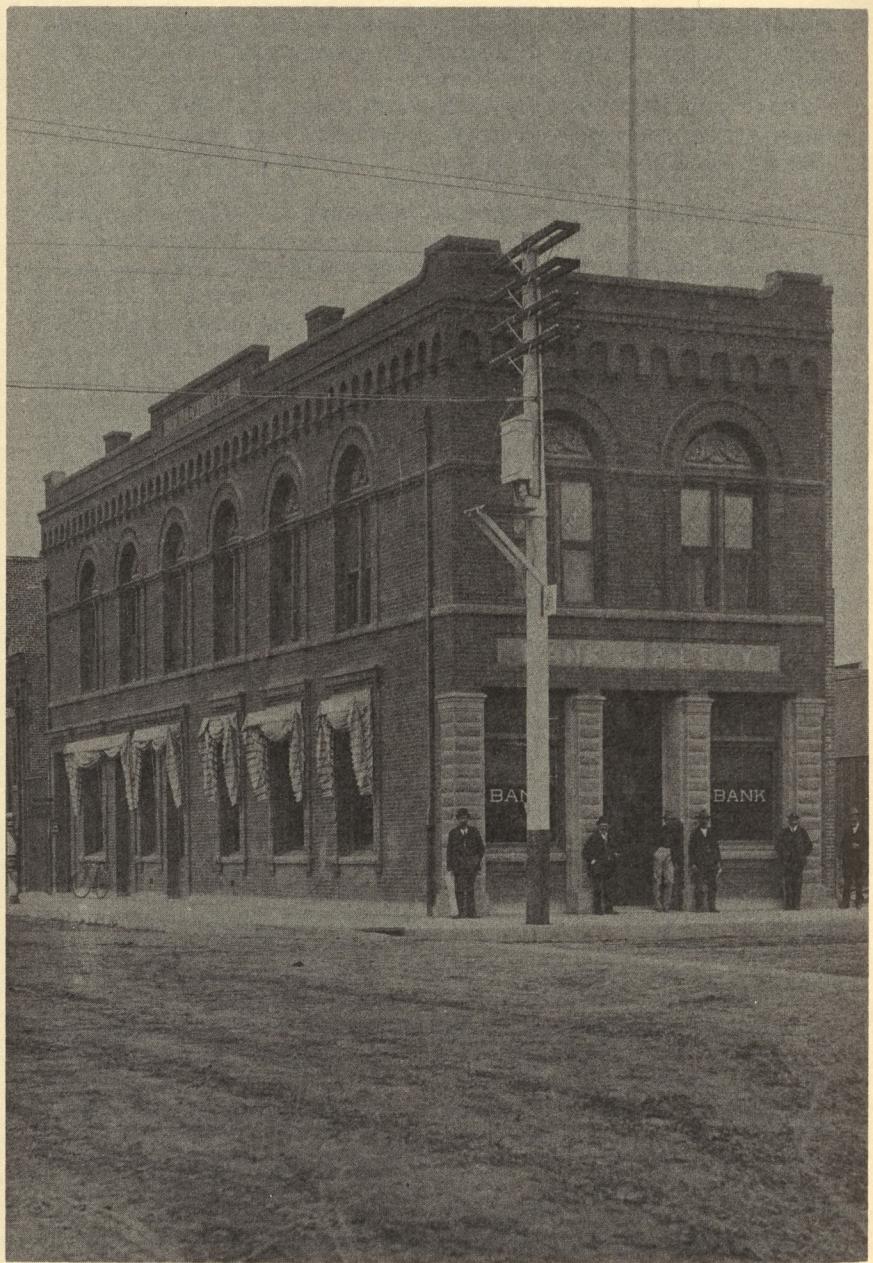
When I started to work for Bank of Hueneme it was one of the early days of Union Oil Company of California, of which Thomas R. Bard was the first president. That company was made up of Sespe Oil Company, Torrey Canyon Oil Company, and Hardison & Stewart Oil Company. Returns for the first two were deposited in Bank of Hueneme, returns for Hardison & Stewart in First National Bank of Santa Paula. It was near the beginning of the 1900's, I think, when the Staats-Torrance crowd bought out the Bard holdings and some other. "Black Bonanza" gives the history of Union Oil Company of California from Stewart's side: I am anxious to read the history from the Bard side. I already know some of it.

Neither of the banks I worked for bonded me. I asked them about it, and the answer was, "We have known you since you were five years old and we know you are not spending more money than you should." It was a bad start, for the man who followed me at Hueneme was a Chicago man whom they had *not* known since he was five.

One other thing we did not have in Bank of Hueneme was a series of safe deposit boxes. If a customer would buy a tin box, made for the purpose of holding deeds and other valuable papers, the Bank would keep the box for him without charge, normally we might have as many as two dozen of them, and anyone wishing to go through his box would call for it and have the use of the directors room, no charge for any of this. We never bothered to have the owner sign a card either on coming or going. The same was true of the Fillmore State Bank, now Fillmore Branch, Bank of America, etc., until the new bank building was erected on the corner of Central Avenue and Main Street. The old bank building was constructed in 1905.

The first bridge across the Santa Clara River was not built until the arrival of the sugar factory and the town of Oxnard made it more than ever necessary. Prior to that time all of our mail came from Montalvo to Hueneme by stage. They brought not only mail but money, the latter by Wells Fargo Express.

After I went to work for Bank of Hueneme (probably in 1896), I had been granted the week-end off, so arranged to have tickets



Bank of A. Levy

for my girl friend and myself for a play Friday evening. A day or two later it started to rain and up to Friday afternoon no one had been able to cross the river. Chambers and Glenn Bros. had the contract for carrying the local mail, so I asked at the stage depot early in the afternoon if they were going to try to cross that afternoon. The answer was, "Our contract with Uncle Sam requires that we drive to the river at mail time, and then if we decide that it is safe we are required to go."

I seemed to be the only passenger, and when the time arrived to go, Ed Chambers and Jess Glenn harnessed four horses, put the mail and express in the stage and we started for the El Rio crossing, as there was less quicksand there. After looking things over they started and plunged into the river. Each man had a whip and each held the reins on two horses. It was hardly a minute until all four horses were swimming and the stage was floating crazily in the stream. Well, we got across safely but I decided that I must not presume on my luck again that way.

During the time I was in the Bank of Hueneme there were so many kinds of currency that it was difficult to classify them. The most unusual was referred to by the bankers as the "jackass bill." According to the story (which I believe was printed in the American Banker) an engraver working in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving was working on this bill when he received notice that he was to be discharged for some infraction of the rules. Naturally he was pretty sore about it, and tried to get even with Uncle Sam by making the eagle on the bill look like the nose of a jackass when held a certain way. I think it was what they called a Treasury note, but it has been many years since I saw one.

One thing in early day banking in Ventura County would surprise one today. The banks did not use pennies. If a check called for \$10.52 we paid \$10.50. If it called for \$10.53 we paid \$10.55. It usually balanced out at the end of the day. From time to time a traveling preacher called to cash a check which had been given to him. I believe he was the only person who ever asked me for that extra 2¢. He said, "There are a great many things I can get my children to do for a penny."

The earliest bank hold-up in Ventura County, I believe, was in the nineties. Paul Charlebois had a hardware store on the Southwest corner of Main and California Streets in Ventura. About three doors to the west was the Bank of Wm. Collins & Sons. Bill Reilly was Sheriff then. When he heard that a man was in the Bank demanding money he rushed into the hardware store, grabbed a rifle, loaded it and managed to capture the man. Reilly was afterward warden of the State penitentiary at Folsom. Reilly was a fine shot with a rifle. He, Earl Soule, C. C. Teague and a few others had a rifle team that was famous in Southern California.

One of my good friends in Los Angeles banks was James B. Gist, cashier of Central Bank, afterward Central National Bank, at the northeast corner of Fourth and Broadway. When the Security First National Bank (or whatever its name was at that time) absorbed Central most of the officers went along. Gist remained with the Security long after most bankers retire. I can recall yet seeing him sitting in the front of the bank, chatting with his many friends.

With one exception I have enjoyed training the various people I had working with me in banks. Two of them, especially, I enjoyed working with; one of them, Clarence R. Young, is still manager of Fillmore Branch, Bank of America, and the other John Lagomarsino, Jr., who was for some years an officer in Ventura Branch, Bank of America National Trust & Savings Association. So far as I can recall, Florence Lewis, afterward for a time City Treasurer of Fillmore, was the only woman who worked in a bank during the time I was a cashier. I can't recall any other bank in Ventura County who had any feminine workers. It wasn't the custom then, but it's quite different now. As cashier I was never paid more than \$175 per month. (Now they start inexperienced girls at a higher figure than that.)

Of our early day bank presidents in this county, such men as Thomas R. Bard, E. P. Foster and C. H. McKevett, there was one thing in common, a desire to leave a legacy to those who were to come after them.

The history of the newer banks in the County, many of which were organized after I resigned from bank work in November, 1918, will have to wait for a future historian. Now we deal largely with branch banks, something that Canada had enjoyed for many years but that were not legal in the United States during my early banking days.

Due to the fact that I became a bank cashier at twenty-five years of age my business associates were mostly men older than myself, I secured a liberal education in banking from them. Much of what I absorbed can never be told.

## *Membership*

### **LIFE**

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds  
Mrs. Myrtle K. Dudley

### **SUSTAINING**

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

August 1963

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

The Ventura County  
Historical Society Quarterly

VOL. VIII, No. 4

AUGUST, 1963

C O N T E N T S

*Theodosia Burr Shepherd*  
*California's Pioneer Floriculturalist*



Theodosia Burr Shepherd

# *Theodosia Burr Shepherd*

## *California's Pioneer Floriculturalist*

*By*

MYRTLE SHEPHERD FRANCIS\*

The Shepherds managed to eke out a living the first three years after their return. The children always needed new clothes and were sensitive about wearing their coarse, patched garments. Night after night Theo lay awake wondering how she could give her children the things they needed, for she realized what they should have even more keenly than they did. She could not teach school, give music lessons, or sew steadily, but with Will's help she did manage to get the house-work done.

There was little or no social life for the Shepherds at the time, but the tide turned for them in the winter of 1881 when the children were sent a Christmas present of a year's subscription to Harper's *Young People*. An exchange column was running in the back pages of the magazine at that time and Gussie, who had been busily collecting stamps and birds' eggs for several years, started to exchange his stamps with eastern boys. One day Theo noticed that the exchange column not only offered children's things but grown-up's possessions too, and the thought came to her mind that here was a chance to get some of the pretty things for her little girls for which she was so eager. She sent off an advertisement to the magazine offering to exchange California ferns, sea mosses and shells, pressed wildflowers and flower seeds, for fancy work and other trifles dear to the feminine heart. The response was overwhelming. Everybody seemed eager to get the products of California, and Theo was able to give her children the little luxuries that meant so much.

Articles in greatest demand offered by her were smilax bulbs, calla bulbs, and pampas plumes. The rage for the last was just beginning. Clumps of this majestic South American grass, with their snowy plumes towering fifteen to twenty feet above the plants, were a feature of the California landscape in the eighties. The plumes had to be prop-

\*The following article is condensed from a book-length typescript written by the late Myrtle Shepherd Francis, daughter of Theodosia Burr Shepherd, and is restricted for reasons of space to that phase of Mrs. Shepherd's life concerned with her work as a pioneer hybridist, floriculturalist, and seed dealer. The full typescript is in the Ventura County Library, which stands on the site of the famous Shepherd Gardens.

The W. L. Shepherds migrated to Ventura from Oskaloosa in 1873. In June of that year Mr. Shepherd, together with John Sheridan, purchased the Ventura *Signal* from J. H. Bradley. By 1877 Shepherd was broke; and his wife moved to San Francisco for a short time, while he went east to refinance. The narrative printed here begins after their return to San Buenaventura.

erly cured, the sheaths stripped off, and then dried in the sun. The wiring took several days, then each plume was wrapped in newspaper and stored in a wooden box until ready to ship. The samples Theo sent satisfied the dealers, and she sold all she had on hand and advance orders for next season's crop.

The request for Theodosia Shepherd's flower seeds increased so rapidly she could not keep pace with the demand. Letters and more letters continued to pour in offering for exchange every conceivable article of fancy-work, but Theo had to refuse many desirable things because her supply of flower seeds ran out.

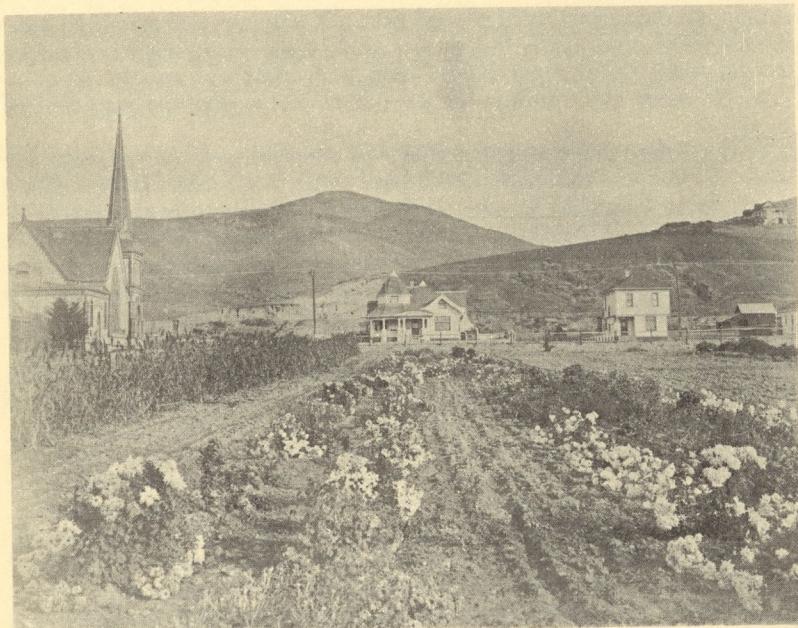
She had to grow more and greater variety the next season, for through this exchange she had been able to clothe herself and three girls and obtain many ornaments and household comforts. She poured over the catalogues of James Vick, John Lewis Childs, and Peter Henderson, trying to decide what treasures to select from the many there depicted; but when the time came for ordering, her small store of money had been spent for necessities. Then it occurred to her that Peter Henderson, whose name was a household word, might be interested in California's curiosities.

With childlike confidence she packed a box of her choicest seeds, sending them with a naive letter which must have touched and amused the famous seedsman, asking him if he cared for her seeds to send in return seeds from his catalogue. Theo waited for several weeks, hoping that she would get a reply; and just as she had given up hope, there came a more generous package of seeds and a letter saying that her seeds had been tested and found of high germinating quality. Peter Henderson thanked her and closed his letter with these prophetic words: "I am certain that California, before fifty years will have passed, will be the greatest seed and bulb growing country in the world. I advise you if possible to get into the business at once."

Her husband was much encouraged by Henderson's letter. He had been raised on a farm and loved the soil. Perhaps he might discontinue his law practice and go into the flower seed business with Theo. But first it was necessary to acquire more land. After considerable deliberation, they decided to borrow a thousand dollars and buy the two acres adjoining them, on which Robert Wilkin had had his apiary. This was added to the \$2500.00 mortgage already on their home.

What was she to grow? Callas and smilax bulbs, which she knew through her exchanges were in demand, and to begin with she would exchange them or buy outright from folks around town as she had done with the pampas plumes. She meant to go on selling them also, although quite an acreage of the grass was being planted in Santa Barbara. When the price went down, she would go into something else. When the plumes were ready to cut, callas were dormant, so she could collect both at the same time.

Theo found it more difficult to buy callas and smilax. One woman asked her for the address of firms to whom she was selling, and an-



Theodosia B. Shepherd's flowers on  
the vacant lots of Ventura

other shut the door in her face as she said, "I've heerd you'r a coinin' money, an' you ain't a-going to make eny offen me!"

After digging the callas, the leaves, roots, and bulblets had to be removed. Then those for sale were spread out to dry under the pepper tree in the back yard. Experience had taught her that the bulbs baked if left in the sun.

In the meantime, she had sent samples to Peter Henderson, Childs, Vaughan and Vick, with letters requesting their orders. Not knowing wholesale prices, she asked them to make her an offer. Her samples were so large and fine she received a trial order for callas from each firm, the price being \$7.50 per hundred for monster tubers and \$5.00 for medium. The small ones and smilax were rejected, but there was a demand for smilax seed. "Could Mrs. Shepherd supply it by the pound?"

Water was her main problem. She could not afford to have pipes laid, so had to depend upon the rains. Without water such plants as verbenas, stocks, touch-me-nots, and hollyhocks could not be sown in the open ground. So the undaunted Theo retrieved an old upright piano box that the little girls had long used for a play house and set it up south of the kitchen. One end was removed and made into a door; and

in the sloping front were placed two old window sashes which were whitewashed, and below these, on a shelf made of a single twelve-inch board, were placed cigar boxes filled with sand and soil in which to start the seeds and cuttings for the potted plants that she also decided to sell.

Heretofore she had given freely of everything in her garden, and when she announced that she would sell in the future, San Buenaventura threw up its hands in horror, and a storm of disapproval greeted the intrepid woman. Everyone declared that no one would patronize her business and that she could never make it pay. But Theodosia Burr Shepherd flew in the face of public opinion and continued on the course she had set for herself.

Thus was started California's great bulb and flower seed industry. The first bulbs were collected from gardens about the town of San Buenaventura, and the first seeds sown in cigar boxes in a propagating house made of an old piano box! Thus Theodosia Burr Shepherd entered the field of horticulture, a delicate woman without previous knowledge, little children clinging to her skirts, and poverty knocking at the door. Her only assets were an overwhelming love for plants, boundless enthusiasm and courage, and abiding confidence in herself.

Eastern trade lists were first sent Theodosia Shepherd in the fall of 1883, which emboldened her to send for those of European firms. She studied them all, trying to decide what choice seeds would be best for her to grow. It was difficult, for she wanted everything that was unusual or especially fine. She selected sweet peas, pansies, and verbenas from Sutton and Sons in England, and petunias and coleus from Benary Erfurt, Germany.

Her sales of cut flowers, potted plants and seedlings far exceeded her expectations. though the plants occupied tin cans bought from boys at ten cents a dozen, with the rims melted off on the kitchen stove.

It was reported about the eastern seed trade that "the seeds sent out by that California woman had exceptional germinating quality," and a number of new firms sent her trial orders. On the strength of these, she hired a young English gardener for half-time and made arrangements for him to work in the gardens of friends the other half.

Though still feeling her way, Theo went forward confident of her ultimate success. She visited Santa Barbara and Los Angeles nurseries and got much information as to methods of propagating and growing plants commercially. From them and friends she obtained many rare plants which so crowded her greenhouse she had to put them on boxes under the pepper tree.

Then calamity overtook her. Her greenhouse became overheated in the night and caught fire. Many of her plants were destroyed before it could be put out. Undismayed, she replaced her burned plants from a Los Angeles nursery, employed a man full time, and secured the agency for M. R. Strong's fruit trees. The following advertisement was inserted in the local papers:

Mrs. Shepherd announces rare flowers for sale. Having recently purchased the greenhouse of Charles Bailey, I am now prepared to supply choice plants, vines, palms, roses, fuchsias, carnations, etc. at reasonable prices.

Her position in the business life of the community was established and her garden the show place to which all visitors were taken.

Theo's garden grew with her needs. Water had been piped to all parts of the two acres, and the ground needed for flowers. A hedge of heliotrope across the Main Street frontage supplied her with her entire crop of seed and delighted visitors with its beauty and fragrance. Back of it were rows of callas, cannas, geraniums, and roses.

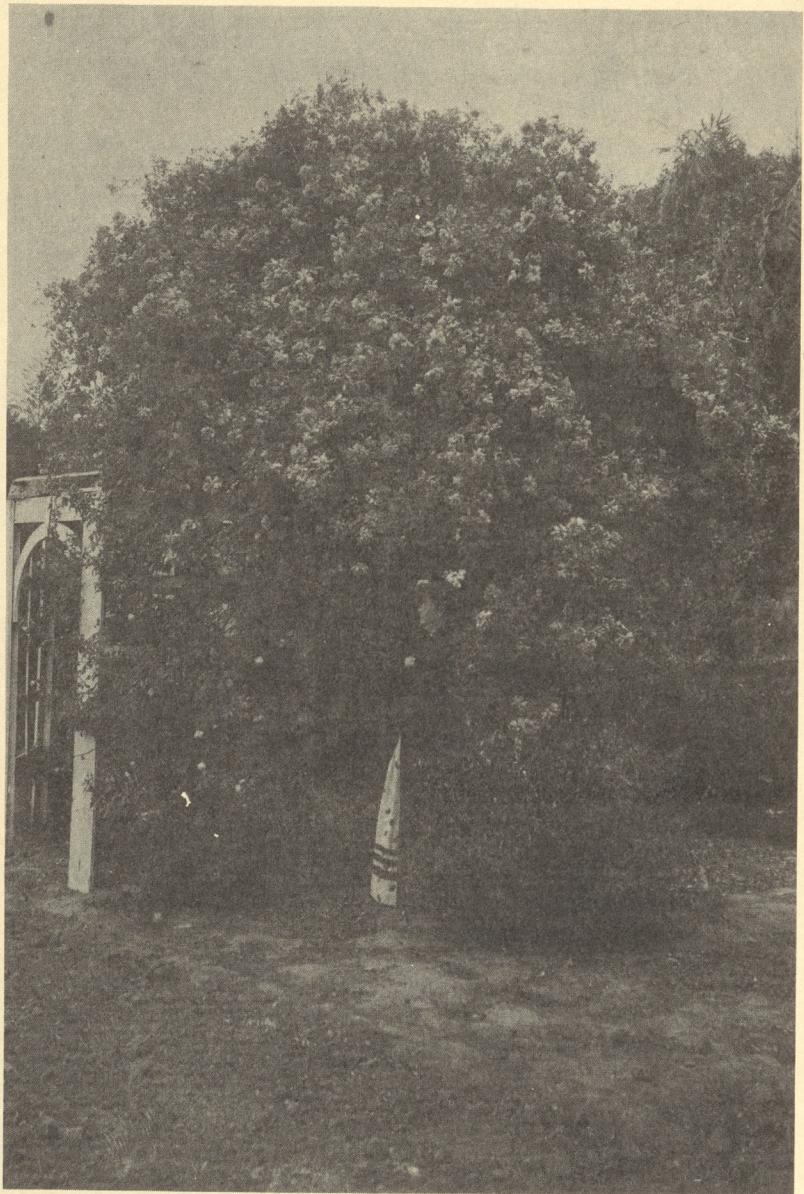
Though Theo planted all her small callas for growing on, each season found her unable to fill all her orders; so it was necessary for her to continue buying them from local gardens. Accompanied by her gardener, she scoured the Ventura Canyon and Santa Clara Valley for them, coming home in the evening with the spring wagon piled high with gunnysacks of the tubers.

The following year Herlinda Sepulveda, in Mexico City, sent her three packets of the native cosmos seed, magenta, pink and white, writing Theo that the "planta was muy grande but the flowers were chiquita." Theo planted the seed early in the winter, and they certainly were "muy grande" plants. Planting them so early had produced an enormous growth of foliage with the subsequent small flowers which proved to be dingy magenta, dull rose and white about the size of a half dollar. Theo felt the plant held great possibilities and selected seed from the largest and finest flowers from the central stems of the best plants of each color. The next year she planted in the spring knowing the plants would bloom at their normal time, and the strength would go to flowers instead of foliage.

She was gratified at the results of her first season's selection. The plants were less bushy, the flowers larger with broader petals, and the colors clearer. Confident that she had an acquisition to the trade, she continued her selection on the same lines the following year when she felt she could offer them to the trade.

Cosmos continued to respond to Theo's magical touch in the most amazing way, with the dull magenta becoming crimson and the pink a soft rose. Some of the pinks and whites had an aura of deep rose around the center, tiny dots of crimson or pink speckled the petals of these flowers; and the flowers were three to four inches across. Those with the dots and aura she named "Mrs. Shepherd's Rainbow Cosmos." Finding small flowers with narrow petals, she selected the narrowest and shortly developed an entirely new type with ribbon-like petals resembling a marguerite. These she introduced under the name "Mrs. Shepherd's New Marguerite Cosmos."

A year or two more of selection brought her most beautiful productions, "White Pond Lily" and "Pink Butterfly," both of which had



A portion of the Shepherd Gardens

four or five broad overlapping, deeply fluted, and pinked petals four to five inches across. These with her other named varieties were sold only by the ounce. Her phenomenal development of cosmos was never excelled by any other of her selective work. A photo of her fields was taken by a representative of Peter Henderson and featured in their catalogue of 1896.

The damage done by the 1884 flood exceeded that of 1874, although no schooners were wrecked. Bridges were washed out, and telegraph poles were down. For days the town was cut off from the outside world. The Ventura River swept through the canyon, flooding homes, uprooting trees, and carrying barns and livestock out to sea. The Santa Clara River wrecked even greater injury as it overflowed hundreds of acres, covering alfalfa fields with mud and debris; and when the waters receded a lake was left below the bluff which stretched from the mouth of the river to San Jon Barranca. A flood of mud and stones poured down on San Buenaventura from the recently ploughed hills, making Main Street almost impassable. The water system was washed out and the water barrels were resurrected, but the supply ran out and tinsmiths did a flourishing business making galvanized tanks for those who had no barrel.

Two Chinamen who farmed the hills had built their shanty, pigsty, and chicken coop at the head of the barranca opening on California Street. One night of the storm a cloudburst occurred; and in the morning the poor creatures were found half-buried in the mud of Main Street, which was littered from end to end with pigs, chickens, and other belongings.

The water ran under Theo's greenhouse, the roof leaked, and the mud piled against the door. Every day she climbed into it through the dining-room window and mournfully surveyed her water-logged potted plants and decayed cuttings. She poured the water from the tops of the pots, only to find a fresh accumulation in a few minutes. The callas had grown enormously; and the other plants lay on the ground a sickly yellow. The weeds were knee-high and paths almost obliterated. Yet when the sun shone out and the delayed stages arrived with their accumulated mail, she forgot her blues in joy over the many orders received.

In 1885 Theo exhibited at the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara spring flower shows and received blue ribbons for her carnations and pansies. The Santa Barbara press said:

*Special praise is due Mrs. Theodosia Burr Shepherd of Ventura County, who has a very meritorious display of choice flowers. They arrived in good condition and looked as fresh as any in the room . . . San Buenaventura is a great place for flowers, contesting the palm with Santa Barbara.*

Though her expenses were heavy that year, she indulged herself with buying a number of rare palms and a night blooming cereus from

Reasoner Bros. The palms were planted in the garden and the night blooming cereus south of the front porch. This cactus eventually grew to the roof. Sometimes a hundred blossoms opened in one night, and many people gathered to view it.

When Los Angeles held its first great Floral Fair at Hazard's Pavilion in 1886, all southern California was invited to participate; but no one responded outside Los Angeles County except Theodosia Burr Shepherd. She interested Thomas R. Bard and two women friends in her project to exhibit her flowers at the fair and represent San Buenaventura. It would have been an arduous undertaking even for one in good health, but Theo's spirit overcame the difficulties of going first by steamer to San Pedro and then by train to Los Angeles. She felt more than repaid by the acclaim in the *Los Angeles Herald* that "put San Buenaventura on the map."

*The only exhibit from outside our own county comes from Ventura. It is in charge of Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherd of the town of San Buenaventura, Mrs. Robbins, Mrs. Sarah Clay, and Miss Edith Shepherd. It is unfortunate that the flowers for this booth did not come until 4 P.M. yesterday, as they had been delayed at San Pedro. This afternoon a large wagon load arrived overland. Mr. T. R. Bard of Ventura furnished the team to allow this county to be properly represented. As it is, Mrs. Shepherd makes from her garden a fine display . . . Mrs. Shepherd's collection has a peculiar interest as showing what a resolute, intelligent woman can do. She is a large grower of flower seeds. The work is done under her own supervision; the industry is her own development. She is succeeding admirably. Vick, Peter Henderson, and other well known Eastern seedsmen, are her regular customers.*

After years of delay, work had started at both ends of the gap in the Southern Pacific Railroad between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles. San Buenaventura was in a fever of expectancy, although it would be a year and a half before the tracks would be laid to the town. The townspeople were apathetic when the first excursion train arrived with railroad officials and notables. They had been disappointed so many times no celebration was held beyond distributing fruit and flowers and meeting the train with carriages to drive the visitors about the town.

All of these visitors went into ecstasies over Mrs. Shepherd's gardens, and a representative of the *San Francisco Wasp* wrote:

*The sketch we present in our cartoon of the flower garden of Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherd, to be appreciated should be seen. Every variety of flower is in its natural home, every shape and hue alike enchanting in the morning sun, with singing of birds and humming of bees, make a picture which Nature alone can color. Mrs. Shepherd shows unremitting zeal and has already made her gardens an extended reputation. She grows bulbs and seeds for all the Eastern seedsmen.*

This article, and the visit of W. Atlee Burpee\*, the well known Philadelphia seedsman, inspired Theo to greater activity than ever before. Mr. Burpee expressed to the editor of the *Free Press* his "surprise and delight, and gave Mrs. Shepherd much encouragement to continue the industry which she was the first to establish in California." To everyone with whom she talked, she told how the mild climate of Ventura County made possible the growing of choice flower seeds, what a delightful occupation it was; and she advised as many women as could to go into bulb and seed raising.

Theo's business grew so rapidly the years of 1887-1888 that she could not fill her orders. She leased all vacant lots in the vicinity and increased the quantity and variety of seeds, and still her supplies ran out.

Capital was at the disposal of Theodosia B. Shepherd, partnerships were offered, and deference was given the woman whom Dr. Van Fleet of Smithsonian said "had put Ventura on the map." Little wonder she was dazzled when the Floral Park Company was organized, and she was enabled to acquire one-hundred shares of stock thereby becoming a member of the board of directors. This company bought a tract of fifty-one acres east of town for an exclusive subdivision, with two parks of five acres each. Theo was given the use of the parks for an indeterminate time, to grow her seed crops; she in turn was to plant them with choice trees and shrubs.

Theo bought herself a handsome phaeton in which she drove about to supervise the planting and harvesting of her crops. Her vision had become so keen that she could detect the slightest difference in a flower at a glance, and could single out the largest flowers among hundreds many feet away. She, herself did the roguing (weeding out inferior and undesirable plants) and seed selection. She did not cut the plants with the half-ripened seed, but placed canvas under such plants as cosmos and shook out the fully matured seed or hand-picked it.

A seed cleaning machine was an unknown luxury; and cleaning fine seeds was one of Theo's problems which her Chinese servant, Wing, solved. After beating, crushing, or rubbing off the outer sheaths of the seeds, Wing would put a handful of them on a large tray; and then tipping, tilting, and blowing, the little Chinaman would clean quantities in an incredibly short time.

Theo was so confident of the continued prosperity of San Buenaventura that she built a new greenhouse and issued her first catalogue in the spring of 1889. No copy of it, nor that of 1890 is extant but the Santa Barbara press said:

*We have just received Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherd's catalogue of 24 pages devoted to plants, seeds and bulbs raised on her place in Ventura. This plucky lady has built up a business which should*

\*For an interesting account of this famous seed house see Ken Kraft's *Garden To Order, The Story of Mr. Burpee's Seeds and How They Grow*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York, 1963.



W. Atlee Burpee

*inaugurate a new industry in this section. No county is better adapted to the raising of flowers than Santa Barbara and Ventura and hundreds of persons could make a good living by intelligently prosecuting this business.*

Theo's business increased so rapidly in the two years following the "boom of the '80s" that she had little time for personal affairs. She could not fill several large orders for callas, freesias, sweet peas, and nasturtiums, so she advertised for a rancher to grow these crops on shares. The two men who had been helping Mrs. Shepherd, Sam Cole and William Bodger, having contacted representatives of eastern flower seed firms and learned the business of growing, decided to form a partnership and go into the bulb and seed raising business themselves.

Theo, though regretting their departure, did not blame them but hired in their places John Bodger and his son who had just arrived from England. She continued her development of cosmos and other flowers, and revived the interest in the Floral Society, which had lapsed during the boom, and urged several of the members to start growing seeds or bulbs for the wholesale trade. She had not the slightest idea that she was bringing them into direct competition with herself, but if she had she would have done it anyway. Mrs. Gould was one of them and was financially independent. She and her husband were not averse to earning a little added income, which Mrs. Shepherd's aid assured. With this assumption they went into the business of raising choice petunia seeds, Theo teaching them the principles of hybridizing and selection and also giving her the addresses of foreign firms who specialized in those seeds so that she might have the best stock to start her work.

The garden of Theodosia Shepherd had become so famous it was listed by Frank Wigan, Secretary of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, as one of the show places of southern California; and she was heralded throughout the United States as the "Flower Wizard of California." She sent an exhibit of flower seeds to the Mechanic's Fair in San Francisco in 1890 and to the Chicago World's Fair in 1892.

Yet with all this publicity Theodosia Shepherd did not make money. She was so free-handed, so sure that she could always meet her obligations when her contract orders were delivered, so generous that she found herself deeper and deeper in debt. When this happened she would be blue for several days, then she would reassure herself that she could always meet her obligations, and indulge in some fresh extravagance! Her time belonged to the people who visited her garden; old or young, rich or poor, their interest in flowers was a passport to this woman who gave her store of flower lore to all.

Ten years from the time she began her exchanges through the columns of Harper's *Young People*, Theo held her first "Spring Opening." It was a momentous occasion. Theo and her daughters stood at the intersection of the main entrance path and the one leading to the greenhouses. Her husband conducted newspaper editors and prominent people about, all the while expatiating on the remarkable ability of his

wife. Wing, with his derby hat atop his queue (as a tribute to the occasion) distributed the new catalogue. The *Democrat* gave conspicuous coverage to the affair:

*The beautiful garden of Mrs. T. B. Shepherd was the center of attraction all day Saturday. Mrs. Shepherd and attendants were "at home" to the public from ten to five and at least three-hundred guests enjoyed their hospitality. The garden was more than usually beautiful. The flowers, in gratefulness for the loving care given throughout the year, budded and bloomed in glorious array for this occasion. The queenly rose was out in all her brilliance . . . In the recently built greenhouses were seen potted plants in choice varieties and in great profusion, among others delicate imported azalias in several shades, from pure white to crimson. Many cacti were in blossom. Indeed the rare and oftentimes curious plants exhibited by Mrs. Shepherd were beyond description.*

The 1891 catalogue received many favorable comments, especially from Santa Barbara and Los Angeles newspapers. She listed her own productions for the first time, and Theo hoped to add two new fruits to southern California markets. Of her petunias she said, "No flowers in my garden have been more admired than my double and single petunias for their size and beauty."

Mrs. Shepherd firmly believed that California would grow flower seeds for the world, and often quoted Peter Henderson in support of it. Above all else, was her desire to see many women emancipated from the drudgery of housework and engaged in raising flower seeds, growing plants or entering the cut flower business. There was room for all, and it was her dream to have her daughters associated with her; but Myrtle was engaged, and Margaret, who was her secretary, had had several romances. When one threatened to become serious, Theo did not wait for developments but sent her eighteen-year-old daughter to Los Angeles to high school and employed a professional typist.

The representatives of eastern seed firms readily saw that Theo could not fill the large orders they desired to place. John Bodger finding this to be true, left her service and with his son took up acreage at Santa Paula, where they laid the foundations of the great Bodger Seed Farms of El Monte and Lompoc. Theo cheerfully searched for others to take their place.

Her nursery was the only one of its kind in the West, and her 1891 catalogue brought her orders from all over the country. Her cut flower trade was increasing, and she received many wholesale orders from eastern firms for cosmos, stocks, cannas, cyclamen, geranium, and many other seeds. She did not realize the expense incident to keeping up a show place and that her time, of which she was so generous, was money.

Soon after John Bodger left Theo's employ, a handsome Mr. B., with a charming wife and interesting children, arrived at San Buen-

ventura to spend the winter at the Hotel Rose, ostensibly for the health of his wife. They visited the gardens as a matter of course and were enthusiastic over the array of flowers growing without protection from frost. Mr. B., evidently a man of unlimited means and integrity, became deeply interested in the vast financial possibilities of growing California flower seeds for the wholesale trade, which he realized was in its infancy. He shortly proposed to buy a one-half interest in the business with himself acting as manager. Plans were made to develop and increase the output; land was acquired and elaborate stationery printed. But strange to say the manager's name was omitted, a fact which puzzled Theo and her husband. Suspicious incidents were recalled. At last a casual acquaintance from Mr. B's home town recognized him on the street. The Shepherds had been deceived. They found that a scandal had forced Mr. B. to leave his eastern home, and he had taken refuge in far-off Ventura "until the wind blew over."

Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherd's 1893 Descriptive Catalogue of California Flowers was pretentious in comparison with her other modest little booklets. On the cover there appeared for the first time the cognomen: "Ventura-By-the-Sea."

An English customer of Theo's, fearing that her order might be lost, had added to the address on her letter: "Ventura-By-the-Sea, as it is the first place glimpsed by passengers coming to California on the Southern Pacific." Theo, pleased with the euphonious appellation, used it ever after on her catalogue covers, tradelists, and letterheads. Eventually it was adopted by the Southern Pacific Company and the Ventura Chamber of Commerce. On the back of the catalogue cover was an excerpt from Peter Henderson's letter; "I am sure California, before fifty years, will be the great seed and bulb growing country of the world." It contained fifty-four pages and was descriptive in the real sense of the word. Many rare plants and seeds were listed by her for the first time.

Theo still hoped to have all three of her daughters associated with her in the business, so that when she passed on they would be freed from the drudgery of housework and would have independent incomes. Margaret was her assistant, but not an interested one, and Edith preferred housework. Myrtle was absorbed in her music. Yet in the face of this indifference, Theo continued to dream of her "Women's Flower Seed Company." Her business had not yet been affected by other growers, and she went ahead confident of the future and issued her first tradelist.

A Los Angeles *Herald* correspondent who interviewed Theo at this time wrote:

*Her work in the evolution of nasturtiums has resulted in the giant flowered Sunlight, the giant Moonlight, and Caprice, bought by W. Atlee Burpee, the great Philadelphia seedsman who visited her place and made generous recognition of her work in his catalogue of 1900. She has also other marvels in nasturtiums. Her new*

*creations in geraniums number twenty-four, in chrysanthemums twelve, in poppies three, one of which cannot be described without seeming exaggeration.*

Theo secured a loan from the bank and matured plans for a women's stock company with herself as president, Myrtle as vice-president and manager, and the other girls having shares of stock. Many improvements were made, a good propagator was employed; and Theodosia Shepherd went ahead confident that eventually her other two daughters would take an active part in her business. Much publicity was given the new company, the *Florist's Exchange* publishing two articles about it.

*The name of Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherd, of Ventura, California, has been before the Florist's Exchange readers for many years, both in the capacity of an advertiser in and a valued contributor to our columns. She has resolved, as previously announced, to form a stock company, and to that end the firm has been incorporated under the style of Theodosia B. Shepherd Company, with a capital of \$30,000. The stockholders consist of members of her own family, and we have much pleasure in presenting to our readers a group picture of the lady representatives of the concern. They are: Mrs. Shepherd, herself, Mrs. Myrtle Shepherd Lloyd, Mrs. Margaret Shepherd Oaks and Mrs. Edith Shepherd Kelsey. Mrs. Shepherd is president of the company and Mrs. Lloyd vice-president. The latter lady will gradually assume the general management. She is enthusiastic and energetic, and will help still further develop the already large business of the firm. Mr. Shepherd and the remaining two daughters will not be active workers in the concern. The change in the personnel of the firm will enable Mrs. Shepherd to devote more time to her favorite work of hybridizing, and creating new flowers, in which she has been most successful . . . We tender our congratulations to the new concern, and wish for them the same measure of success that has attended the founder.*

Theo was deeply interested in securing a botanical garden for southern California and discussed it with Frank Wiggan, Dr. F. Franceschi of the Southern California Acclimatizing Association, E. D. Sturdevant, aquatic specialists, and many other flower lovers; but it never developed.

She contributed to the *Florist's Exchange*, *Land of Sunshine*, *Southern Florists and Gardener*, *American Gardening*, *California Cultivator*, *Pacific Rural Press*, and the *Redlands Citrograph*. She spoke frequently before Los Angeles Women's clubs and those of adjacent towns whose members vied in entertaining her.

So many writers, artists and horticulturalists came to the Shepherd home, Theo had little need for other associations though she still retained her early friendships. Those whose companionship she most enjoyed were Kate Sessions, then beginning her horticultural career

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF

CALIFORNIA FLOWERS.

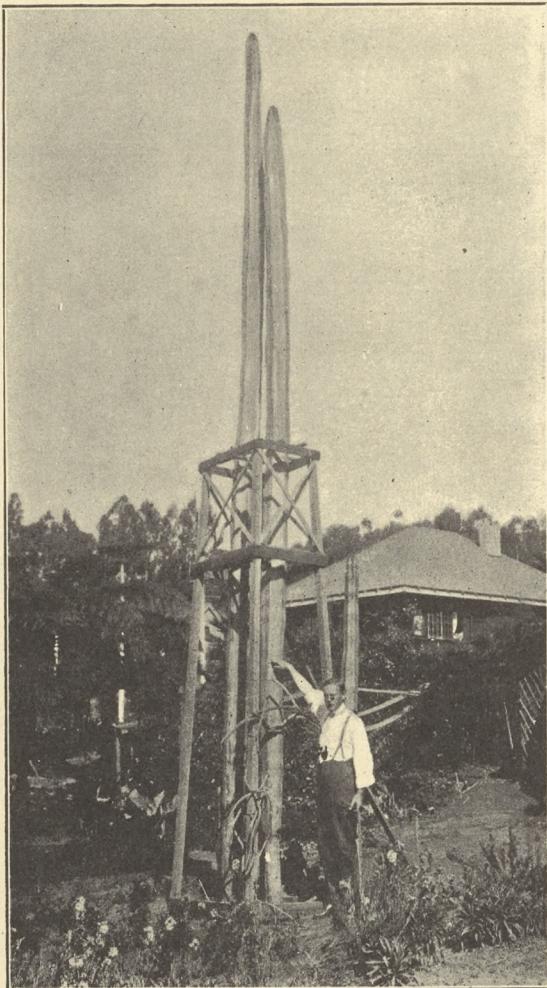
MRS THEODORE A. B. SHEPHERD.

VENTURA - BY - THE - SEA.  
CALIFORNIA.

GROWER  
OF  
PLANTS  
SEEDS  
BULBS  
PALMS  
CACTI  
ETC.

Catalogue Cover, 1898

# Theodosia B. Shepherd Co.



Cereus Gemmatus, or Organ Pipe Cactus in Our Gardens, 30 feet high

Ventura-by-the-Sea, :: California.

in San Diego, Luther Burbank, with whom she renewed her discussion of the influence of the mind upon the plant. When called the "Woman Burbank" Theo disclaimed comparison. "Our methods are the same," she said, "We are standing on the threshold of a new great world that is waiting to be opened up. I rejoice in Mr. Burbank's discoveries, he in mine."

Dr. J. A. Cook, horticultural commissioner, Drs. Edward Wickson and Charles Howard Shinn of the University of California, and Dr. Franceschi, explorer and botanist, were great admirers of Theo. Dr. Franceschi wrote of her, "Her name will last as long as there will be lovers of plants and flowers in this country." Charles Lummis, Editor of the *Land of Sunshine*, visited the Shepherds when searching for the old Indian songs to make into phonograph records; and Alexander Harmer, painter of early California scenes, gave an exhibition of his sketches in their parlor.

"Mrs. Theodosia B. Shepherds Descriptive Catalogue" for 1902 was enlarged to ninety-two pages. It contained a half-tone picture of herself which had been begged for by her admirers, and many cuts of her own productions. She listed her own begonias for the first time, though they were already widely distributed throughout California. She also listed many new and rare cacti and succulents which she had obtained from the famous collector and specialist, A. Blanc.

Charming as this catalogue was, with its poetical descriptions and original illustrations, it did not increase Theo's business as she expected. She was unaware of changing conditions and did not realize that when she started she had no competitors; now she had many in all departments of her business. She had not specialized in a few crops as she advised others, nor did she consider the expense of keeping up such a collection as she possessed. Again she was faced with financial perplexities.

The Goulds grew most of the petunia seeds; Cole and Bodger, the smilax, calla, and freesia bulbs; and Bodger and Sons all varieties of seeds and bulbs. Morse had a large flower-seed growing acreage in the north, and other flower seed growers were starting up everywhere. Every little town had its nursery, so the mail order business was beginning to decline. Collections of rare plants were no longer fashionable; and she was forced to abandon growing cosmos, which was a major disaster. How to protect this crop from wild canaries had always been one of her problems, for the tiny creatures took the seed before it was sufficiently matured to shake out or to cut the plants down as other growers did. Gaily the feathered menaces perched on the scarecrows, the air filled with their trilling while Theo watched their devastation in despair. One season a fourth of the crop was taken, the next a half, and then three-quarters before she gave up after trying the ineffectual expedients of shooting and poisoning.

Theodosia Shepherd was about to realize her dream of California as a vast flower garden, but with none of the financial rewards for her

personally. The great industry she had founded seemed a Frankenstein about to destroy her. Anyone but this woman would have lost hope, but as always obstacles seemed to inspire her with a determination to overcome them.

The last three years of her life were filled with sorrow and disappointment. Concern for her health had always been foremost with the family; yet though her ill health continued, she was buoyed up by her constant publicity. Her very delicacy seemed to attract people to her, and all went away marvelling at her will power and her mental and spiritual qualities.

But her health had so failed she was unable to work in her garden any longer, and her foreman and secretary came to her for directions which they made scant pretense of following. The foreman busied himself with schemes of how best to acquire and develop her still remunerative business, while the secretary read novels in office hours. It was doubtless at this time that Theo's files were rifled of her valuable correspondence.

Theo had been near death so many times it was difficult for those who loved her to realize her life was actually drawing to a close, and she herself refused to acknowledge it. She insisted that she would soon be well again and nothing could deter her from continuing her work. Nor would she relinquish any authority to her husband or daughter. She had dominated so long she did not know how to give up, so lest her last days be made unhappy she was left in control of her business until the end.

Death came to Theodosia Burr Shepherd on September 6, 1906. Her inspiring presence would never be seen again, nor would her pen describe the flowers she loved; but her dreams were a reality—her work accomplished—California was well on its way to becoming the flower seed growing country of the world.



## *Membership*

### **LIFE**

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds  
Mrs. Myrtle K. Dudley

### **SUSTAINING**

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells  
Mrs. Effie B. Daly

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

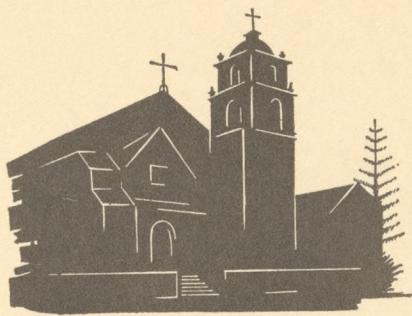
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

November 1963

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

# The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly

Vol. IX, No. 1

November, 1963

## PEN PICTURES OF VENTURA COUNTY

*By HOWARD BLEDSOE\**

Strange to say that tourists or immigrants should fail to visit Ventura County, Southern California, which presents unusual attractions to the traveler, and offers such grand inducements to those seeking homes on the Pacific Coast—a land where beautiful scenery is only surpassed by a delightful climate, where the generous soil is unequalled in fertility; whose air is balm, whose valleys, hills and mountains, pregnant with the beams of a semi-tropic sun, are covered with richest growth of wild oats, clover and alfileria. He who has not seen the town and Mission of San Buenaventura, the rich valleys of Santa Clara, Ojai, Simi, and Conejo, should no longer defer to cultivate their acquaintance; while he who has seen their attractive beauty feels that he has stored his memory with an enduring treasure that shall cheer him along the dusty road of life and lead him to return often to behold the glorious original of his dreams.

\*Before the advent of chambers of commerce in Ventura County the Board of Trade assumed responsibility for promoting the area; and prior to the Board of Trade there was Howard Bledsoe, a one man boosters club without peer. Bledsoe's "Pen Pictures of Ventura County," portions of which are reprinted here, was published in 1880. Today it is one of the great rarities in the field of Ventura County history, less than five copies having survived. No credit for authorship is given in the booklet; but the Pioneer Museum copy, presented by N. C. Bledsoe, states in a handwritten note that it was written and published by his brother, Howard.

With the advantages of a settled country, Ventura offers many of the inducements of a new colony. Her lands represent a very large proportion of her capital, while they are as cheap and as fertile as those of her sister counties. The disposition of the large land holders to cut up their princely Ranchos and sell them on terms so liberal as to place them within the reach of men of moderate means, is now the golden opportunity to the immigrant. To men of capital, the Oil Region in the heart of the County offers a wide field, besides many enterprises that shall be mentioned under their proper heads. In short the author has nowhere found in a wide and observing experience on the Pacific Coast, a more healthful and delightful climate, a soil more generous, where nature has done so much, awaiting capital, labor, and enterprise to develop her vast resources.

With an honest endeavor to present facts in the pure light of truth and realty, we offer Pen Pictures to the reader as a small book on a really interesting subject.

Paso Del Mar\*

### Introduction

Ventura County was segregated from Santa Barbara County by Act of Legislature in 1872—bounded by the same and Kern County on the north and west, the Pacific Ocean on the south, and Los Angeles County on the east, and includes the Islands of San Nicholas and Anacapa. Area 1,296,000 acres. The capabilities of this County to support an increasing population are remarkable. After subtracting all those portions of hilly and mountainous lands, too broken for agricultural purposes, there still remains sufficient good tillable land to maintain twenty times the present population.

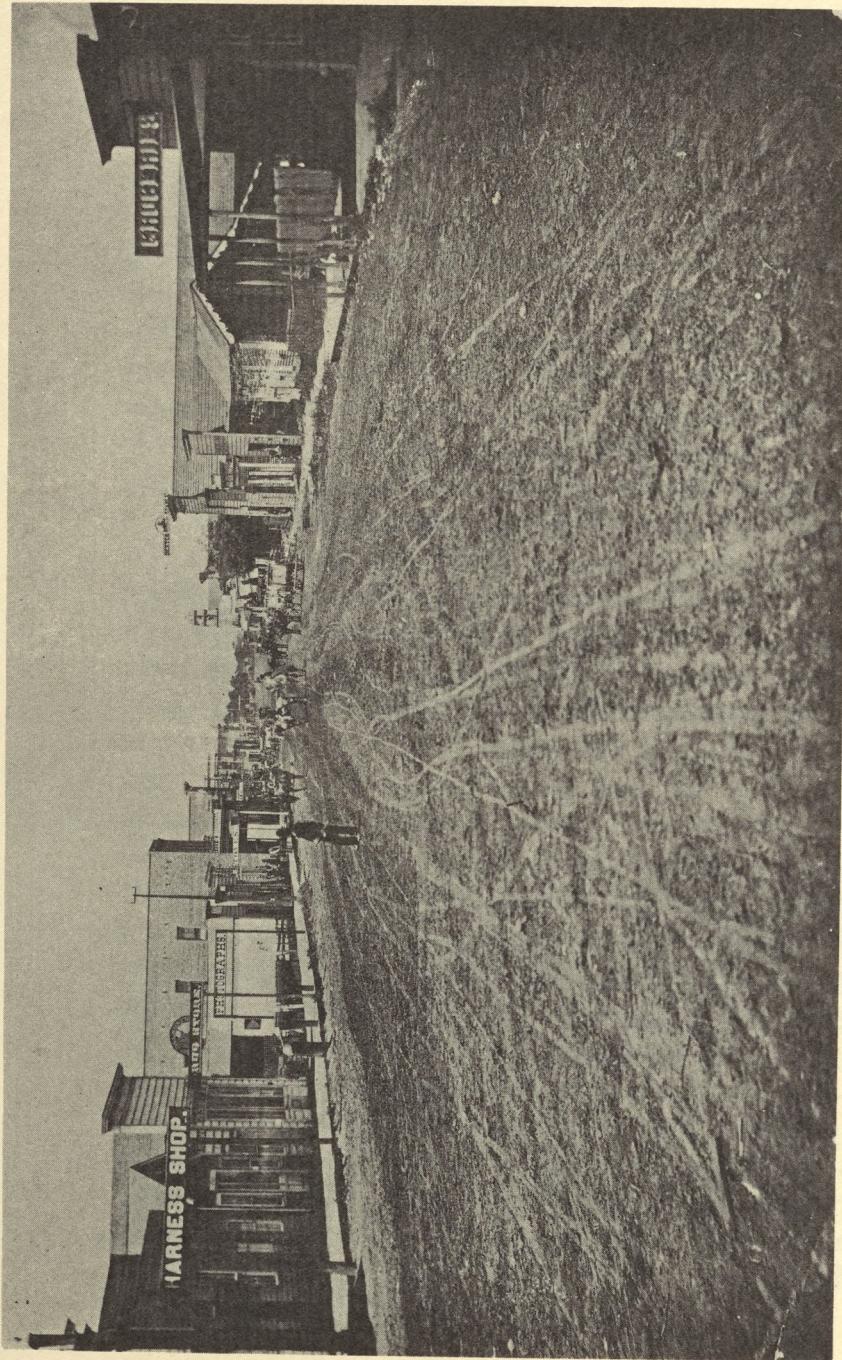
\*Bledsoe's nom de plume.

Entering Ventura at the seaport of San Buenaventura, the visitor is in a region of perpetual summer, where the entire fruits of the temperate and semi-tropic countries are growing in orchards, yards, and gardens. The larger valleys are grain-growing districts, which generally produce without irrigation; but wherever water touches the soil, it is prolific in fruits, flowers, vines and vegetables.

A few miles back from the sea, forests of live oak cover the northern hillsides, while the southern slopes are coated with grass, flowers and honey-bearing sage. The prevailing trees along the water-courses are sycamore, walnut, cottonwood, and some other inferior varieties; while extensive white oak forests are found in portions of the Ojai, Conejo and Simi valleys.

The Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers, with their tributaries, furnish almost unlimited water power and irrigating facilities. These rivers, running through their respective valleys, carry fertility in their flowing paths to the very verge of the ocean. In none of the Southern Counties are the two prime necessities—timber and water—more abundant, fuel cheaper, or as easy of access.

Of the million or more acres in the County, scarcely one hundred and fifty thousand are under crop. Over all the rest roam droves of sheep and herds of cattle—but not as many of these, by any means, as the land seems susceptible of supporting. Roads (excepting railroads) penetrate every section of the County that needs them. The sea outlets are San Buenaventura and Hueneme (pronounced Way-na-mah). From these points run steamers of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, to San Francisco and intermediate ports. The other outlets are main roads leading to Newhall, on the Southern Pacific Railroad, to Los Angeles, and to Santa Barbara.



San Buenaventura, Circa 1880

Stages run daily from San Buenaventura via Saticoy and Santa Paula to Newhall, also westward to Santa Barbara, and a tri-weekly stage runs to Los Angeles, by way of Hueneme, Springville, and Conejo; besides a short line to Nordhoff and Matilija Springs. The famous resorts for pleasure and health are Nordhoff, and Matilija Hot Sulphur Springs.

A fine drive of twelve miles from San Buena Ventura takes the visitor to the village of Nordhoff, where good accommodations are found at the two hotels. Six miles from there are the Matilija Springs, twenty-two in number. The effect of a sojourn at these resorts is noticeable on the animal spirits; but besides the delicious water, this is largely attributable to the freshness and beauty of every object, together with the balmy climate. There are other places, such as the Camulos, Santa Paula, and Conejo, that are noted for the mildness of their climate, about which more will be said further along.

A glance at the industrial prospects of Ventura will show that they are brighter today than ever before in her history, because her industrial interests are becoming more diversified, and her wealth more generally diffused. Her people follow the employment of general farming, fruit-raising, wool-growing, bee-keeping, stock-raising, gardening, oil refining, and make wine, brandy, olive oil, flour, bacon and butter. All the grains and fruits of every land and zone grow here in profusion, while the vegetables do well. Of late, flax is also being extensively cultivated. Odessa and White Wheat have proved a grand success in this county this season, and have given a boom to the farming interest which promises untold wealth to the County. A million pounds of the purest and whitest honey is the estimated yield from the apiaries of Ventura County this season. The wool clip of this

Spring is valued at \$125,000. The Oil region, in the heart of Ventura, has scarcely been touched, and it is difficult to believe that the very paradise of petroleum is within the limits of this richly endowed County . . . The rainfall for this season has been twenty-two inches. The temperature, as recorded at San Buena Ventura, does not vary over 10 degrees the year round.

### SAN BUENA VENTURA

The County seat is situated on the shore, near the mouth of the Ventura River—the land rising in gentle and natural slope towards the east, while on the north it rises rapidly and sharply into hills, giving a variety and a constant transition of prospect. The site admirably adapted by nature for the building up of an attractive and imposing city. Embowered amidst stately eucalyptus and the graceful pepper tree with festooned arbors and bowers of roses—fountains glittering in the sun, blue grass lawns, interspersed with the orange and cypress—the stretching vine and blooming lily. A clime where the softest skies in California are hung in beautiful transparency above, where tropic flowers are ever offering up their incense, where the earth is carpeted in Nature's glorious green, prodigal in fertility, where earth, sea and sky unite to form a picture—bewitchingly beautiful. To the north rises a long range of picturesque hills, on a spur of which is seen the large brick Grammar School House. Viewed from this vantage ground, the town and its environs present a landscape of rare beauty. There are few places that can surpass this prospect. It has in it something classical—the quality of satisfying the soul, like a lofty strain of music. As outlined from that point, the near view includes the old Mission, with the venerable ruins around it—the Court House, dwellings, hotels, stores, churches, warehouses, wharf, oil refineries, town

plaza, palm trees in the old Mission orchard, beach, and surf at the mouth of the Ventura River. At intervals through the perspective of tall blue gum trees, rises the high roof of some dwelling outshining its neighbors. Looking eastward, we see the broad valley of the Santa Clara, resembling the sea in its expanse; and miles beyond, in the distant horizon, loom up the Guadalupe Mountains, in a line toward Los Angeles. Further to the right, Point Magu, its bold bluff jutting to the sea. In the middle distance, to the southeast, is Hueneme Light-house, the gleam of whose lamps we may see at night.

Next comes the bold outlines of Anacapa and San Nicholas\* to relieve the grand sweep of the eye. Toward the west a glimpse is gained of Santa Barbara Channel; then the high hills of San Miguelita, with all their pastoral richness, spread before us, making a pleasing contrast; and the view is filled by a river stealing out of the greenery of San Buenaventura Valley.

Turning north, Ventura Avenue, leading off from Main Street, extends through this vale of loveliness, with its fine orchards and well cultivated gardens, its shade trees and profusion of flowers. Further on are seen the oak-crowned hills of Ojai; then, wave after wave of azure mountains, rising grandly into the serrated tops of the Santa Ynez. "All mere descriptions of landscape must be humdrum and disappointing, and at best are but catalogues of a gallery of pictures." This is especially the case when one attempts to describe the scenery of Ventura mountains, with their affluent glories. To return to the School House, which is 150 feet above sea-level, and has four large rooms, furnished and ventilated after the modern style. It seats about 250 pupils, and is the High

\*Either Bledsoe had remarkable eyesight or San Nicholas Island was much higher in 1880! He probably means Santa Cruz, since he makes the same mistake later in the text.

School, presided over by J. C. Oliver as Principal, with six assistants; daily attendance (including the primary department) 250 scholars. The Library contains the usual cyclopedias and some late scientific works, besides a good selection of miscellaneous books. The grounds are ample and command a view scarcely surpassed on the Pacific.

A few steps down the southern slope brings us to the old Mission . . . In the progress of the last thirty years the Mission has but little part, but the old buildings around it are giving away to new ones, and under the energetic management of the present minister, Father Cyprian Rubio, the grounds will bloom with the orange and rose, and tiled roofs be relics of the past. The church is built of adobe, with foundations of stone; the mortar used being as hard as the rock it cements. A square, or *plazito*, inclosed by buildings, in a state of ruin, on the east and north includes besides the church, the old burying ground on the west of the main building, where sleep the dead in the shadow of the church they built.

Two blocks east of the church and on the south side of the street we find the Bank of Ventura, a flourishing institution, which does a general commercial banking business, and issues commercial paper available in any part of the world. The officers are the gentleman named as follows: Thomas R. Bard, President, D. S. Blackburn, Vice-President, Henry Clay, Secretary and also Cashier.

To the east and on the same side, we note the office of the Ventura *Free Press*, M'Lean & Sons Publishers and Proprietors; and to the west, the Ventura *Signal*, Sheridan Bros., Publishers and Proprietors. Both newspapers are wide awake to the progressive age in which we live, ably conducted, and devoted to the interests of Ventura County and Southern California.

Next after these guardians of the people's rights, we

notice the Public Library and Reading Room, Mr. Frank Newby, Librarian, who has the happy faculty of making strangers feel at home. The town feels a just pride in her well-selected library of choice books, where also the leading magazines and current newspapers of the day may be found.

The office of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company is at Bartlett Bros., agents, who are courteous gentlemen and merit the confidence reposed in them for their correct knowledge of business affairs. They are deservedly popular. This agency is also prepared to furnish emigrants from Europe with tickets on the very best of terms, being agents for the old and reliable Hamburg-American Steamship Company. Parties residing on the Pacific Coast by simply stepping into the store of Bartlett Bros., can purchase tickets that will bring passengers from any part of Europe. They will also issue bills of Exchange on any city in Europe, so that purchasers may either procure their tickets at this office or at their home office. All sums of money are remitted at the very lowest rates, and any information in regard to the agency will receive prompt attention.

Opposite the old Mission Church are three hotels: Ayres', Palace, and Santa Clara. These hotels have ample accommodations and are ranked first-class. Another opposite the Post-office, the Revere House, is kept on the European plan. The office of the Los Angeles and Ventura Stage Line is at the Palace Hotel, and the Telegraph Stage Company's office is at Ayres' Hotel.

Wells, Fargo & Co.'s office is opposite the Post-office on East Main Street, John B. Wagner, Agent. The Telegraph Office is on the same street, and communication is had with all the important places on the Pacific Coast.

The Masons and Odd Fellows are in a flourishing

condition and hold their meetings in Spear's Hall. The Good Templars have fitted up a hall on the south side of East Main Street.

A number of fine brick stores are on the south side of Main Street, with overflowing stocks of first-class goods always on hand, and the latest improved agricultural implements.

Going south one block from the Palace Hotel we find the Court House, half hid from view by a double row of olive trees in what was once the old Mission orchard. The two date palms that stand in between the hotels and the Court House, are the largest in California, and were planted by Father Santa Maria nearly one hundred years ago from seed he brought from Spain.

The churches are represented here by Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Catholics, Episcopals, and Christians or Disciples.

Two oil refineries are situated near the warehouse and wharf (to the southeast of town) make both illuminating and lubricating oil, and use asphaltum for fuel. The crude oil is hauled from tanks at the oil wells, which are several miles back from town. West of town is another oil refinery of one hundred and fifty gallons capacity, near the mouth of the Ventura River.

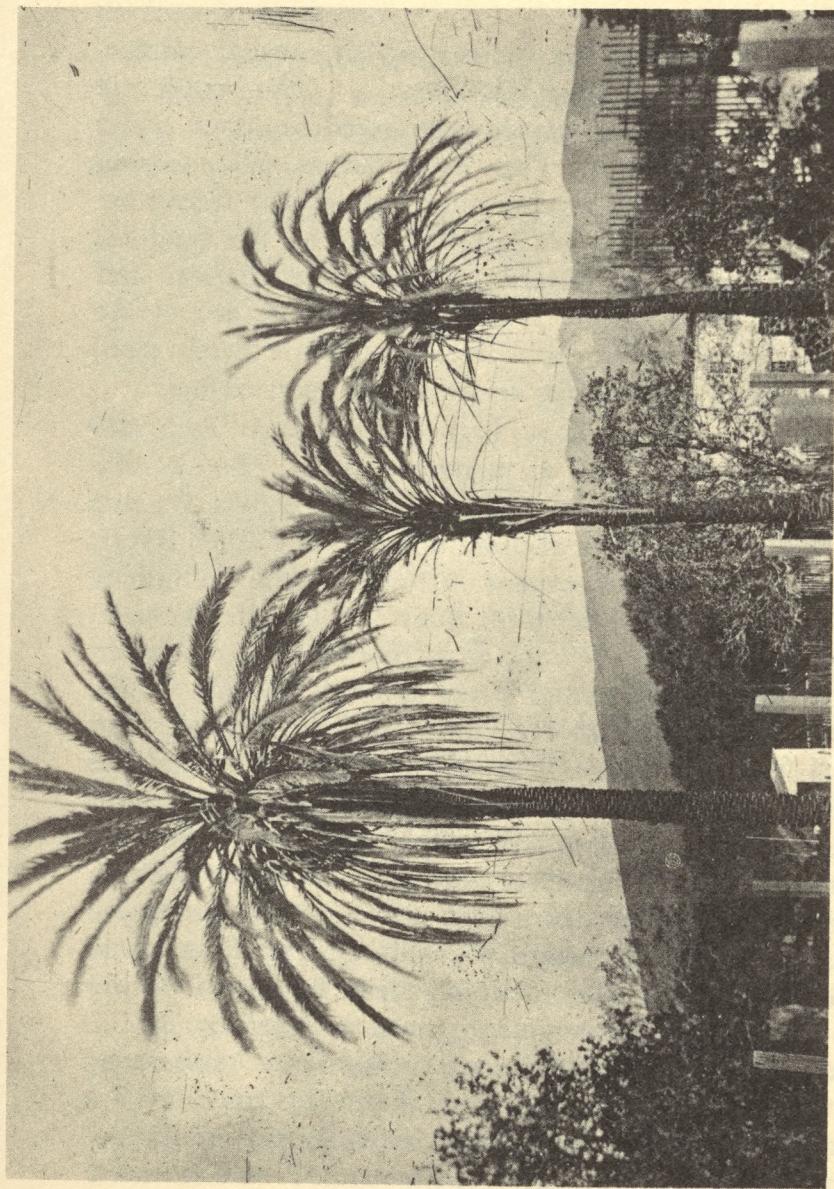
Two lumber yards supply the demands in their line at very moderate prices. A fine quality of brick is made in the neighborhood from red clay, and used principally for all buildings, supplanting the old time adobe.

The Ventura Brewery, a large building, brews a fine quality beer and supplies the town and County. The town has one fire company which is rarely called into service, owing to the most complete arrangements the Santa Clara Water Company have made to supply the place

with water works, which conducts the water in iron pipes under pressure sufficient to throw it over the highest building in town.

The professions are represented by men of culture, and the trades by skilled workmen . . . The people are progressive and have always been noted for their polite attention to strangers. Two Brass Bands and a String band are ready to do service on all patriotic or festive occasions. The markets are supplied with all the products of the soil and of the waters, the best quality of meats and the finest game at low prices. Strawberries are in the market from January to November; while green peas, new potatoes and turnips are fresh the year around.

Livery Stables keep first-class turnouts and safe teams always on hand at moderate rates. The favorite drives out of town take the visitor up Ventura Avenue and beyond whence an enchanting view of Valley, River, Ocean, and hilly landscape is unrolled, another to Saticoy and Santa Paula, famous for their fruitful fields, orchards and wealth of flowers, or to Nordhoff by the splendid drive-way of Ventura River and San Antonio Creek, on the beach with lovely views of ocean, islands, and Santa Barbara Channel, or down to Hueneme and the light-house. These drives are a constant succession of lovely scenes—the charms of which begin before the town is left. The winds are from the west off Santa Barbara Channel in day time, and a land breeze generally at night. The mornings and evenings are delightful. The chilly Northwest winds that prevail at San Francisco during the spring and summer months, are modified by the Islands and Channel, besides are turned from Ventura by the lay of the land west of here. There has never been a case of sunstroke, yellow fever, hydrophobia, or the occurrence of a tornado in this town.



Three original mission palms, Circa 1875

## SANTA PAULA

Leaving behind us San Buenaventura with its shining beauty of ocean, land and flowers, we switched off to the northeast on the Telegraph Road, which threads the valley of the Santa Clara sixteen miles to Santa Paula, and penetrates a country whose views are lovely beyond description. Twenty miles eastward may be seen the Conejo and Guadalupe range of mountains, stretching towards and apparently jutting into the sea. Nearer on our right is the Santa Clara River, glimpses of which are seen like the sparkling eye in the face of happy childhood. On our left are the lofty ranges of Ex-Mission hills. Before us is a wide far horizon of serrated heights, draped in warm purple, and bathed in tender mists. Over all this panorama a dreamful silence, broken only by the faint beating of the distant surf. Peace is in the very air which lazily slumbers over the valleys, while a river rolling over yellow sands is at our feet, and the low sighing of the breeze over the telegraph wires, seem to carry the soul back to other days.

Eight miles on our way is the pleasant village of Saticoy, near the famous spring of that name, called after the Indians who dwelt there long before the men of this generation were born. In the olden time, migratory Indians were fighting in the grim tragedy of existence at these springs, weaving around their matchless waters many a bloody tradition, that add a pleasant, melancholy, and romantic charm to the enchanting beauty which renders it the most delightful spot in the middle valley. It is now the centre of a prosperous settlement, made famous for its fine farms, handsome groves of trees, the culture of flax, corn, fruits, vines and flowers. No poor land, no poor cultivation of farms here. The busy hum of industry tells its own tale to the visitor, in the rich luxuri-

ance of its corn crops, of its orchards and gardens. No prouder monument need mark the progressive spirit of the people than that of their public school house, which is a light and a land mark of this choice spot of earth. The Post-office is a neat building covered with masses of flowers, with a yard full of rare shrubbery. The view of the ocean on the southwest is uninterrupted. The lands known as the "Santa Paula and Saticoy Rancho" were owned by George G. Briggs in 1866, and contained four leagues, or something over seventeen thousand acres. It was sub-divided in 1867 and sold to settlers. The entire settlement has a fine exposure to the sun; the valley gently sloping east towards the river, and is well adapted to the growing of all semi-tropical fruits.

Leaving Saticoy, seated on the top of the stage, one surveys the landscape at his leisure, takes in the various points of interest on the road, and falls into the easy tranquil frame of mind which prepares him to hail with philosophic rapture the peaceful village of Santa Paula. The visitor finds himself entranced by the loveliness of the scenery along the noted road. The hills and dales are aglow with green and gold, rows of pepper trees, groves of eucalyptus, around each shrub some brilliant creeper twines, the orange gleams from green and snowy bowers, and on every hand the soft and sunny air hums with the laden bees that homeward fly; while beneath its native oaks soft glows the velvet sod of Santa Paula. This is the way it looks to the traveler in 1880. Here we notice the superior tillage of small farms, which has frequently been the subject of comment from observant visitors.

This village is next in size to the County seat, and is the centre of a choice fruit and farming section, as well as the petroleum region. Being supplied with delicious water from Santa Paula Creek through pipes from an ele-

vation of eighty-five feet, it is of course never in danger of fire or dust.

Besides the Farmers' Canal and Water Company's ditch, with four hundred inches of water running through the village, extending from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles above to 6 miles below town, there are two or three other ditches, but they are of minor importance. The village runs nearly east and west, which affords protection from all winds except the sea breeze. Here, there is an abundance of water running to waste, while there are thousands of acres not yet utilized, along the foothills particularly, where, if this were turned upon it, would teem as it has never teemed before, and be covered with perennial and over-producing harvest fields.

This entire valley of the Santa Clara River is a favored spot of California—the soil, sunshine, and salubrity cannot be exceeded on the face of the earth. The climate is better than that of Italy or Egypt; it is everything the heart of man could wish—at once warm, breezy, bracing, and free from malaria and extremes of heat or cold. Here the warm and equal temperature, as in the Ojai, is such that the land, with proper irrigation, regularly produces two crops—one in summer and fall, the other in Winter and Spring of each year. We profess to have a pretty good eye for land, and the few days we spent in the midst of this garden spot confirmed what many persons have told us about its productiveness. Here from forty to sixty acres of land, thoroughly worked, give a profitable support. The population of these four leagues (17,000 acres) does not appear much to exceed a family to the 160 acres, just along the road in this, one of the oldest parts of the County. From the ex-Assessor we learn that corn will average 50, barley 50 and wheat 40 bushels per acre, without irrigation, all over these valley

lands. Corn is principally tilled here, because the wild mustard outgrows small grain, so as to overcome it entirely—but this only in particular places. We have seen a field of fifty acres of Odessa wheat which will yield at least fifty bushels to the acre; this will be worth at least \$1 per hundred pounds. A bunch of thirty-two stalks grew from one grain of this wheat to the height of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, the average of the field. In all directions around here, the success in raising Odessa wheat insures great wealth to the County.

The splendid flouring mill of Messrs. Blanchard and Bradley, run by water power, is situated at the mouth of Santa Paula Creek. Their brand of "Middlings Purified" is much sought for in the markets here, and is preferred by many to that made in other localities. The same firm have an Orange orchard of one hundred acres in the neighborhood of Santa Paula, fenced with a hedge of limes along the public road. Another attraction is a grove of thirty-five thousand eucalyptus trees, about as thick as they can well grow, and from fifty to sixty feet high, and just six years from the seed. Everywhere you turn are seen tropic and semi-tropic fruits and flowers—in orchard, yard and garden, making attractive, pleasant and valuable homes. Rosy, healthy children were playing among beautiful flowers as bright and fair as their own sunshine. Santa Paula School is in a flourishing condition. The school-house is suitable, and its surrounding. Here are found the usual Postoffice, Express, Telegraph and Stage Offices, and the Santa Paula Hotel, the latter ever ready to receive and accommodate guests. Three stores with assorted stocks of first class goods, and all the shops are found here, the blacksmiths outnumbering the rest. A livery stable, with good and safe teams, complete the list. In the variety of rare fruits and flowers, this

place is very showy. Its variety of evergreens is remarkable, and the growth of young orchards is something wonderful. The writer ate fruit of the loquat and guava, and examined a spray of date-palm fruit, which, as specimens, were as fine as ever grew in Central America. The superior tillage of the land, the variety of crops, the quantity of fruits, the number of hogs, and other stock raised, all attest the general thrift and prosperity of the people in and around Santa Paula.

### H U E N E M E

Hueneme, which is distant twelve miles from San Buenaventura in a southeasterly direction, the road running over a mesa, rising gradually up to its highest part and descending to the Santa Clara River, at the ford six miles from either place. The country between the bluffs of the river and Hueneme is nearly level, with vast fields of grain and flax, presenting a scene at once peaceful and busy. The farm houses are hidden away among stately groves of trees, while the fields for the most part are unfenced and reach far and wide. The views are necessarily limited to the far off mountains and the immediate neighborhood along the road. Everywhere is seen such immense crops. Passing on our left the "fairy bower of the Colonia," owned by J. G. Hill, and on our right the handsome residence of T. R. Bard we are now in the heart of the Colonia Rancho. The next object of interest is the octagon shaped light-house, built on a point one mile from Hueneme, whence a revolving light throws its friendly beams to the mariner. We at last find ourselves in the village, where it is difficult to describe the quiet delight one feels as he gazes on the expanse of land and ocean spread before him; the tranquil azure like a part of the sky inlaid on the emerald bosom of the earth. Away to the southwest, twenty miles or more distant, the

island of Anacapa rests its arched foot in the primeval depth of ocean; and further west the San Nicholas\* rises with bold outline from her dewy bed to catch the fogs of ocean and hold them as a halo around her lofty head.

After these majestic features, the next that strikes the stranger's eye are the immense warehouses—the largest south of San Francisco. Between warehouse "A" and "C" there is a forty-foot roadway for teams to pass in to load or unload. Twenty-seven platform cars are always in readiness so as to handle them quickly in loading. A substantial wharf extends out eight hundred feet to a depth of thirty feet of water, and has double tracks for the cars. These valuable improvements were made by the indomitable energy of Thomas R. Bard, who is the principal owner and manager.

There is quite a village growing up here, and besides the dwellings, there are three stores, telegraph and post-office, wharf and steamship offices, blacksmith shops, and the Pioneer Hotel. Regarded with the cold eye of the captious traveler this hotel fills every requirement; and, from a California standpoint, its scale of charges are very low. The school-house is a prominent building, as it should be, and the worthy County Superintendent, D. D. DeNure, is teacher.

Hueneme is the "embarcadero" of a large back country, and derives its chief importance from that fact, particularly as being the shipping point from the rich agricultural valleys and pastoral hills of the Simi, Conejo, and Santa Clara ranchos, Pleasant Valley, and the products from the wonderful rich lands of the Colonia Rancho at its door. The water supply is from one artesian well. Think of the quantity used and that which is running to waste from this well (not over 100 feet deep)

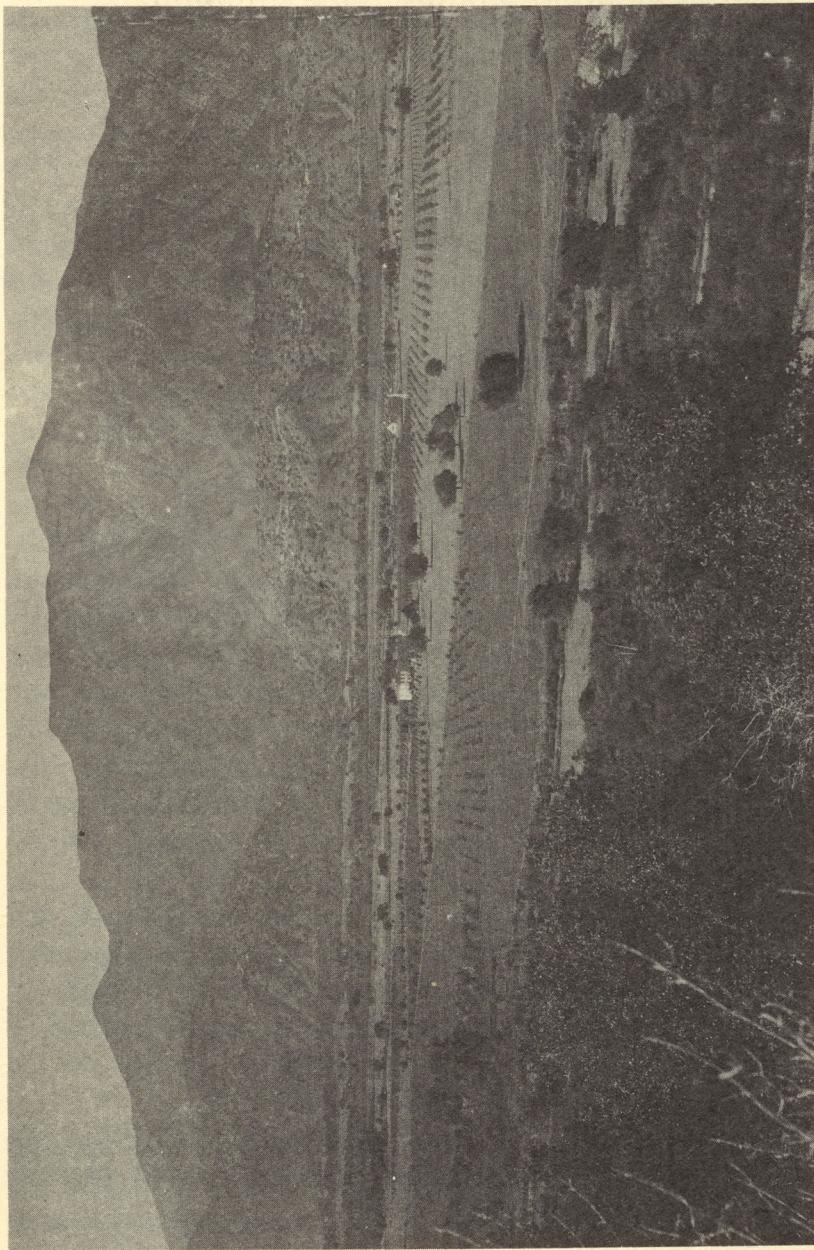
\*Santa Cruz.

and the reader will have an idea of the abundance of artesian water found here.

Hueneme is situated on nearly level ground, almost touching the sea—only a sandy beach intervening. The town site was laid off by the owner Mr. T. R. Bard; and will grow and expand as long as freight can be more cheaply floated on waterways than rolled on railways. The great grain crop of 1880 will make this wharf and the one at the county seat groan under the immense weight, for many months after threshing time. A mild climate prevails here; the sea breeze blows from the west; elixir permeates every cubic foot of this sea air; each breath inhaled, and every drink taken of the artesian water, is so much clear health gained. There are few places where quinine would be so likely to sell at a discount as at Hueneme—and indeed, at San Buenaventura. In the future, here will be a popular sea-side resort for bathing and fishing, and sailing over to the islands. The shipping facilities offered the farmers, stock-raisers and wool-growers will always command a successful business from the Wharf Company. Good roads lead out north, east and west, with the ocean for its outlet on the south. Farmers bringing their produce into the village, keep up an air of business that enlivens the streets. Telegraph communications by way of San Buenaventura is had with all the important points on the Pacific Coast, and a regular steamer of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company plies between San Francisco and Hueneme. The Ventura and Los Angeles Stage Line carrying a tri-weekly mail passes through here. The attractions of a fine climate, rich soil, good business opportunities with the immense increase of wealth that is sure to follow a diversified industry, gives a promising outlook for Hueneme—and thus we leave it.

## N O R D H O F F

Nestling down in the bosom of the Ojai is this famous resort of the pleasure seeker and invalid, which even without the attraction of its unequalled climate, would charm by its beauty, freshness and repose. Situated in the valley of Ojai Rancho, which lies principally between the Ventura River on the west and San Antonio Creek on the east and is about twelve miles from the seaport of San Buenaventura. This magnificent rancho of over 17,000 acres is covered for the greater part with forests of live oak and white oak, particularly around Nordhoff, which is in their midst in a stretch of the valley at its broadest part. Perched a thousand feet above the sea, this spot has the first and most important elements of a resort: remoteness from cities, landscape beauty, and a delicious atmosphere. Add to these, for the pleasure seeker, the presence here, for many months yearly, of the most agreeable society; and for the invalid suffering from pulmonary complaints and asthma, the mild, balmy and soothing properties of the climate, and the fame of the place will be explained. The sea breeze by its journey across mountains and hills is so tempered that it is mild and stimulating; soothing without enervation, and warm without being hot. To the north rise high mountains prolonged in a serried succession of curving crests, bare on their summits, but covered with pine forests on their northern slopes; while farther west the line is broken by the Ventura River, which has torn its broad way through them and filled its valley with rich deposit. Beyond the winding river and fruitful valley are Topa-Topa Peaks, standing in bold relief and keeping eternal watch over all this loveliness at their feet. The Valley of the Ojai is free from excessive wind, cloudiness and dust—the number of cloudy days is small. The average rainfall is



Ojai Valley before oranges were planted

about fifteen inches. Here, where modern civilization has commenced to blossom most beautifully, is a climate where exercise is delight, where sleep is a revelation, and where appetite finds wholesome stimulus to eat abundant food, life becomes an enjoyment at once. We had conceived no such wealth of beauty, of stimulation, and of vegetation as greeted us here at every turn. Important as this region is as a resort, it is over-shadowed by its agricultural and pastoral industries. It is in the Ojai that the wheat crop reaches its maximum quality and quantity. The traveler along the roads in all directions sees wheat, wheat everywhere; growing, too, under forest. This is the way it grows around Nordhoff, where the trees appear to be just far enough apart to let in the sunshine sufficiently to keep an even growth of grain. These are the white oaks which grow in the valleys, while the evergreen live oak loves the steeper hills and the deep side valleys. The scene approaches in its perfect cultivation and prosperous air the noted Saticoy and Santa Paula settlements noticed elsewhere. The Nordhoff Hotel, Barrows Bros. proprietors, and Glen Cottage, kept by W. S. McKee, and a number of cosy cottages are open for visitors, and whose proprietors aim to make their guests at home, and by so doing they induce the same people to return to them year after year. To those who have already visited Nordhoff it is not necessary to tell the story of its charms, but there are thousands who have never been fortunate enough to get a glimpse of its loveliness, and to such the writer means to speak.

### SPRINGVILLE

Springville is situated in Pleasant Valley, a tract of Government land containing about 1003 acres that by accident escaped the limits of Spanish Grants, and is now

patented to the individuals who took it up under the laws of the United States. The stage road from San Buenaventura to Los Angeles passes through the village, which is distant from San Buenaventura 16 miles, and from Hueneme (northeast) 10 miles. It is located in the heart of one of the greatest grain growing districts in the County, with a soil exceedingly fertile surrounding it. A ditch taken out north of and passing through the village and extending six miles south, carries 2700 inches of water for irrigating purposes. There is a Post Office and store. Near here are a thousand acres of land lying between the Calleguas and Colonia Ranchos belonging to the Mission Church.

### NEW JERUSALEM \*

New Jerusalem is a promising little village about 8 miles east of the County seat, and near the east bank of the Santa Clara River where the County road to Los Angeles crosses that stream. Situated in the midst of a rich farming district with good schools, stores and shops, and a very fine Catholic Church building. It lacks a Post Office, which would be a great convenience to a number of worthy citizens.

### CONCLUSION

We realize as we pause for a survey of Pen Pictures that we have but comparatively touched upon this wonder land of Ventura. Thus far we have said but little about the government lands, which have a peculiar value for their situation on the "outside" having escaped the mete and bounds of the inclosing lines of the large ranchos. Upon these lands may be found the houses of the thriving bee-keepers tucked away in the sheltered nooks

\*Present day El Rio.

of the foothills along and among the mountain ranges. There are many little valleys scattered through these mountains, where the sheep-men keep their flocks. In the canyons are patches of government land where dairy-men keep their cows, and generally have a few acres of alfalfa (which attains its most luxuriant growth in this County) from which the richest yellow butter is made. There are many thousands of acres of government lands, mainly in the mountains, that cannot be of any present use but for bee keepers and pasture. Hereafter, settlements will be most likely made upon the great ranchos because of the liberal management of their owners. The unlocking of thousands of broad acres of the large landed estates tends to promote a more equal distribution of wealth, and this, with the natural advantages of climate and soil make the inducements offered the immigrant superior to those of any other County of Southern California. Now is the time to buy land, and build homes in this finest of agricultural regions on the coast. Education receives that attention its importance demands; the fine school houses, presided over by well trained teachers, shows that the citizens of Ventura are wide awake to the fact that "intellect now commands the forces of the world and science leads the van." The causes and influences that have been barriers to the natural and regular flow of population and wealth into Ventura, having in a great measure ceased to operate, it will not be unreasonable to expect a comparatively rapid development for the near future.

## *Membership*

### **LIFE**

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds

### **SUSTAINING**

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

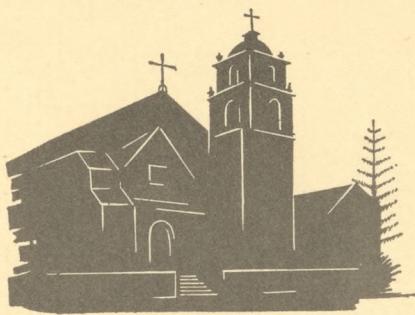
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

February 1964

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The editorial staff is composed of Chas. F. Outland, Chairman, Mrs. D. A. Cameron, Mrs. C. R. Nieland, Grant Heil and Robert Pfeiler.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

# The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly

Vol. IX, No. 2

February, 1964

## *Montalvo, Saticoy and West Saticoy*

From the Ventura *Free Press*,  
October 6, 1899

Unlike most English names for places, the names given to towns and localities in California are generally significant. The name Montalvo was suggested to its founder, J. G. Hill, by a Saticoy druggist, who had been reading a Spanish romance, in which a description was given of a locality exactly similar to the site of this California town. The name seemed suitable and when surveys were made in 1887, the town was thus christened. Eastern people, used to good old English appellations, or anglicized Indian words, are often at a loss to know how these Spanish titles should be spoken. They will find it a safe rule to follow, not to pronounce them as they are spelled. Montalvo is said to mean Mound Olive, and does not follow the fact stated above, for the rules for English pronunciation apply.

Like many California towns it has an origin too recent to furnish history. It was laid out in "boom" times a dozen years ago, and has proven its right to existence, for it contains a neat church, owned by the Methodist denomination; a fine, large school building that would be an ornament to a town four times the size of the one in which it is located. There are also two good stores centrally located, whose chief stock is groceries, but the purchaser may find a limited quantity of drugs, paints, oils, and articles of clothing of the commoner sort. Mr. George R. Bellah is the proprietor of one of the mercantile establishments and F. E. Morrill & Son of the other. Montalvo is a good business point, for both of these firms

are doing well. You will also find here an implement house, a first-class blacksmith shop, kept by J. L. Fernandes, a paint shop, a good depot and a fine, large warehouse. The postoffice is kept by Morrill & Son in their store and is a mailing point for quite a large district.

A pumping plant which supplies the town with water is in successful operation. Montalvo water is noted for its purity, several wells with windmills are a noticeable feature. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company report this water as the best on their California route, and they have had it analyzed by Prof. Hilgard of the University of California, very little objectional mineral matter is found in it. The supply of water obtained by boring is ample, and if necessary could be used for irrigating.

There are no imposing residences in Montalvo, but many neat and pretty cottages, that show care in construction and good taste in those who occupy them. In many yards are choice shrubs and flowers; pretty vineclad porches and rustic seats mark the lover of nature's decorations.

Montalvo is located on a southern slope, with the Santa Clara River on the south. A rich stretch of country lies beyond it, and there in the sunlight gleams the blue Pacific. Groves of eucalyptus and hedges of pepper trees enclose vast fields and orchards in this rich section. Artesian wells bubble on every hand. Montalvo is on the S. P. R. R., which connects Los Angeles with Ventura; it is five miles from the latter and about 80 miles from Los Angeles. It is the terminus of the railroad to the sugar factory at Oxnard. There are stages from here to Hueneme, El Rio, and Springville. The new road now being built by Southern Pacific Railroad Company to Chatsworth passes through Montalvo.

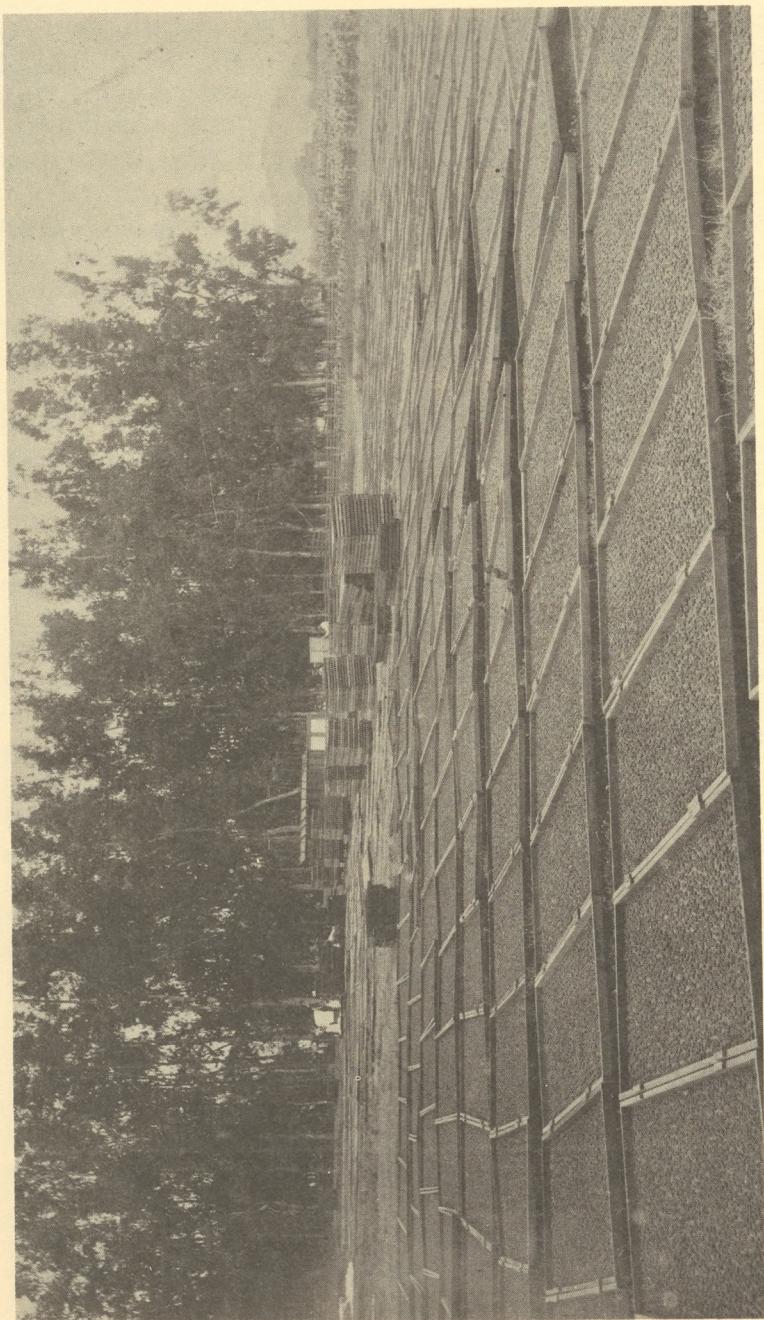
The town is chiefly noted as a shipping point for the varied products of the rich country around it. Immense quantities of beans, sugar beets, dried and green fruits, barley, etc., are annually shipped from Montalvo to other points in the State, or to the far East. Inside of three

weeks in this dry season of '99, \$10,000 in cash were received by Montalvo orchardists from one San Francisco firm for apricots sold from the trees fresh. As this fruit was assorted, much yet remained to be cured and shipped later. Around this thriving town men who have fruit orchards are well prepared to care for their own fruit. This section is the true home of the apricot, and large orchards are being set each season. The coming year will be a phenomenal one in this respect. Prices have been low for dried apricots for some seasons, but this year they are much better, and this encourages putting out a much larger acreage.

Formerly apricots were cured in dryers by artificial heat, but this made the work so arduous owing to the necessity of constant attention throughout the entire 24 hours, that our orchardists now dry this fruit on trays in the open air. Large pitting sheds are erected, where tables are supplied and men, women and children are employed cutting and pitting the fruit and placing it upon trays. These are loaded on flat cars and run into smudge boxes, where they are treated by sulphur fumes to bleach and protect against insects. When sufficiently fumigated the fruit-trays are removed and wheeled on tracks made for the purpose to the drying grounds close at hand. Here they are dry in a short time and are sacked ready for hauling to the warehouse, or to car or steamer, for immediate shipment.

During the apricot season which usually lasts from three to six weeks, quite young school-boys and girls earn \$1 per day and many, who become expert at pitting, earn much more.

Some fine looking walnut orchards are found here, and those who own them find them fairly profitable in some locations. One gentleman had an orchard of about 40 acres, but after experimenting for over 20 years decided other things more valuable for him to raise and has taken most all of these trees out and is planting out apricots instead. This is the outer border of the successful walnut growing district. Peaches, prunes, and almonds



Apricot drying yard, 1890s

do not prove satisfactory so near the coast and are being entirely discarded. Olives, plums, pears, persimmons, apples, figs, and loquats do well.

The principal annual crops raised in this section in ordinary seasons are corn, various varieties of small beans and Limas, the latter being the great staple. This season being dry a great amount of barley was sown in the valleys, which has been a surprise to even the old residents in the amount of good hay, and in the immense yield of grain produced. Grain is usually sown to some extent every year on and near the foothills, but valley land is considered more valuable for better paying crops as a general thing.

Here, as in all other sections of Ventura County, all kinds of stock are raised. Fine horses have been made a specialty, but the low prices and two short years, making feed exceedingly high, have caused this industry to be much diminished. Large auctions have been held here at various times in which high-bred horses have changed hands at very low figures. There is now a demand for work-horses of heavy weight, and markets seem to be looking up all along the line.

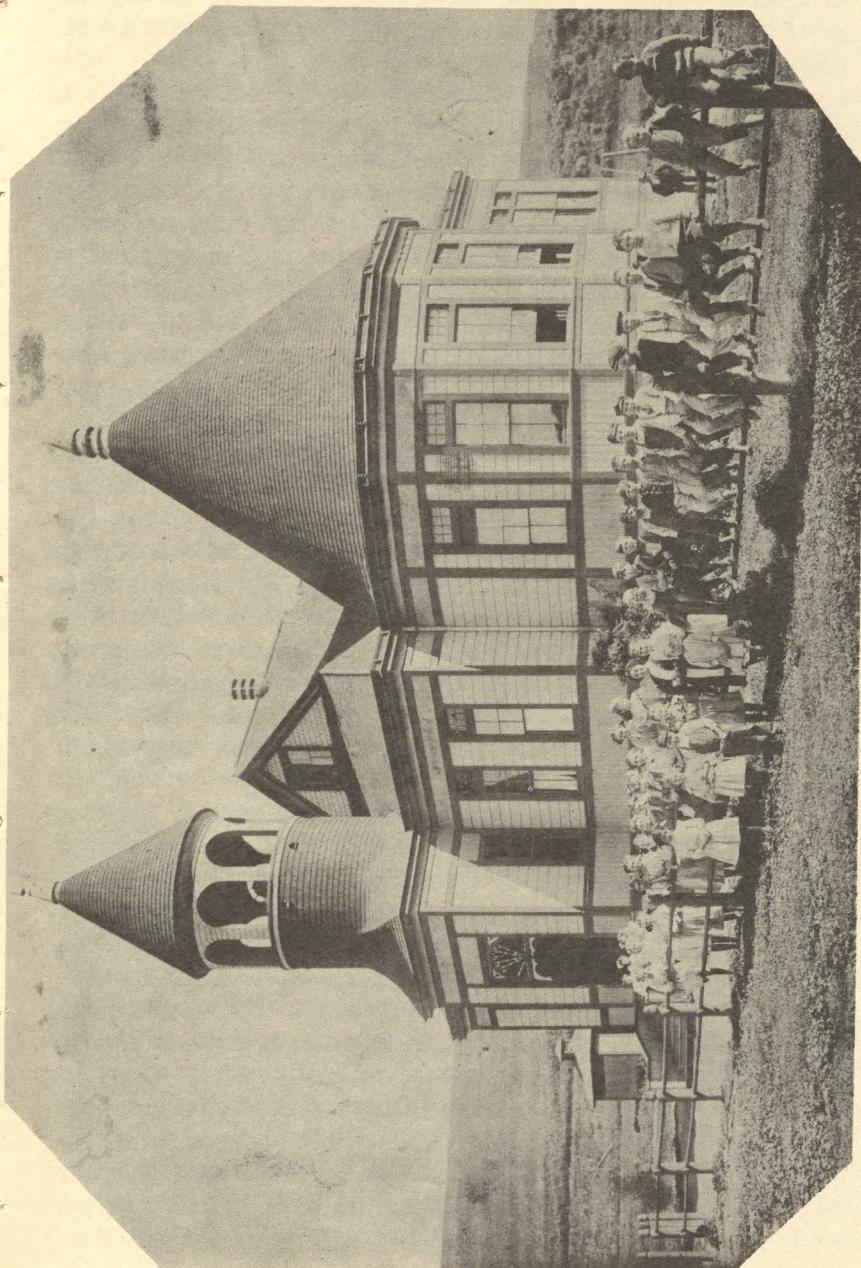
Sugar beets are being tried here, and it is hoped when this country is blessed with a plentiful rainfall, that it may prove a profitable business. This is the first season, and some ranchers have not raised enough to pay for the harvesting and the beets remain in the ground. Others have done well. About 15 tons per acre are considered a good yield. It costs as much to harvest a few tons per acre as when the crop is large. The soil here is considered to be excellent for beets as the average per cent of saccharine in fields sent to the factories is 20.

A great natural curiosity in the northern portion of the town of Montalvo is a mound that has been thought by some to be the work of aborigines. It has an altitude of 150 feet above the surrounding country with smoothly sloping sides. It is probably one-quarter mile in length. On its summit one will find an excavation and a few loads of building stones in its most slight place. This work

was done just before the town lots were placed on the market at public sale. Here was to have been erected an university, but hard times came and the project was abandoned. South of this mound the land for some distance is lower than the surrounding portions of the Santa Clara valley, probably owing to the debris from the mountains being stopped in its progress by this height. On the north side of this eminence the valley has filled in the course of time, and the mound there seems a beautiful slope. After the rains of Autumn its green sides are a landmark loved by the people of this vicinity. West of the town at some distance is another of these elevations.

The Autumn of 1898 was a memorable one in Ventura County. The treacherous Santa Clara was bridged after years of waiting. Each season victims had been sacrificed in its murky waters, traffic between the different portions of the county would cease ere its angry currents would again afford safe crossing to man and beast. Its constantly changing and treacherous quicksands were a terror to the traveler. This massive structure consists of 1600 feet of steel spans, a trestle of 300 feet at each end and an earth embankment protected by timber bulkheads. It is a solid and beautiful structure, of which our citizens may well be proud. It is perhaps a half mile from Montalvo, which it connects with El Rio. At its dedication in October, '98, fully one-third of the entire population of Ventura County were out to witness the imposing ceremonies. It was then publicly declared opened for the use of the citizens of this favored locality, and formally handed over to and accepted by the Supervisors. This event marked the beginning of an era of progress that cannot be stayed.

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company contemplates moving the depot about two blocks west, in the near future. Finding Montalvo growing as a shipping point, they are laying several new sidetracks and a force of men has been employed here for many weeks. It is said engine rooms, turntable, and machine shops are soon to be built. Freight cars occupy all available space, and the



Montalvo School

constant switching and puffing and whistling of engines, the heavily laden trains pulling up the grade toward Saticoy, prove that business is good.

The people of Montalvo are educated and aid in the support of all good works. No saloon mars the morals of its youth. It has two departments in its public school with about 100 pupils on its registers. Good work is being done in this school and its students are being prepared to enter High School located at Ventura. Montalvo school district, with several others, combine to make the High School district, and no students pay tuition. The course of study prepares them to enter the State University.

#### SATICOY

All that district comprised in the towns of Saticoy and West Saticoy, prior to the construction of the S. P. R. R. was denominated Saticoy.

The perfect level on which the busy town of that name is situated was purchased by the Southern Pacific in 1887, and a town site laid out by them. Lots were quickly sold and building began. A good warehouse 100x400 feet and a fine large depot were constructed. Nowhere on the line between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara can the traveler find a pleasanter or more commodius station.

A hotel a block to the north of the depot rears an imposing front, and its sign may be read by the tourist before alighting from his car. The Charles Hotel was named in honor of Mr. Charles Duval, one of the early and most enthusiastic promoters of the town. This house has the reputation of being first-class in every respect.

All the business houses here are well fitted up and seem to be on a much larger scale than the size of the town would at first sight appear to justify; but when one takes into consideration the fact that this is a great shipping point of many and various products from miles of fruitful country extending in every direction, one sees that extensive stocks must be kept to supply the wants of such a great stretch of country.

All the products of the rich valleys of the Colonia and Las Posas, their grain, beans, and beets, hay and fruit, the hundreds of acres of the same products in the valley of the Santa Clara contiguous to it, its large orchards of walnuts and apricots, contribute to making Saticoy a great shipping point. There is a fine cooperative store here, which keeps a good stock of groceries, and while making fair returns to the stockholders, tends to lower the price of such supplies, so that now the cost of staples is very little more than in the east. Drugs and general merchandise are also kept here.

A few years since, in Southern California, tradesmen were not content to make a fair profit, but "hasted to be rich." They scoffed at returning any change to a shopper if less than a dime; nickles and pennies were unknown. If you ventured to remonstrate they openly sneered at your parsimony; but they never by any chance gave you an extra ounce weight or the fraction of a yard. Their rule on change only worked one way.

There is one other grocery store here kept by Mr. Emmet Crane. In this place the customer will always find up-to-date goods and fair dealing.

Mr. E. A. Duval has an exceptionally commodious salesroom, and on the day of our visit there, we thought it had quite the appearance of a city dry goods house. He carries a choice stock, and can please the most exacting as to quality and prices. Mr. Duval has been for many years connected with the mercantile business in this country and knows the needs of this locality. The post-office is in this store and W. D. Wright is postmaster.

J. F. Wilson & Son have a good general merchandise store, well lighted and in a good location, and customers are always treated with fairness and courtesy.

The town of Saticoy also contains three blacksmith shops, all of which are reported as doing first-class work. The following named gentlemen are the blacksmiths: F. Brigham, J. Brunty & Son and John McKay. They are constantly kept busy in their line. Such a large extent of farming country affords plenty of business.

Prices for some kinds of blacksmithing are slightly higher than formerly, owing to the advance in the price of iron. The blacksmiths' union at a recent meeting put prices up on that account. As this is said to be an indication of better times, no one is disposed to complain.

Saticoy has two saloons, licensed by the County Supervisors, and kept by Messrs. Cerf and Lagomarsino.

There is a neat Congregational Church built on a large lot in a quiet part of town, away from the clatter of traffic. This edifice was erected in 1891, and Rev. W. Pratt is its genial pastor.

Saticoy is near the centre of the great warehouse district, and is more fortunate than some of her neighbors as she has two warehouses. One, already referred to, built and owned by the Southern Pacific Milling Company, and one erected by the enterprise of the Walnut Growers' Association here. This building is an ornament to the town, is large and capable of storing immense quantities of nuts if desired. It is close to the first mentioned warehouse and to the Southern Pacific Railroad and does not suffer in appearance by its proximity to its pretentious neighbor.

In this building, which is well fitted up with all necessary appliances for the work, the walnuts grown by the members of the Association and all walnuts grown by others who may wish their crop handled by them, are bleached and otherwise prepared for market, at a minimum of injury to this product.

Heretofore the method of treatment has been to scour, sulphur, and sack the nuts, but as buyers claim they grow rancid in a short time when sulphur is used, especially if the nuts are too much heated, the Association intends to try a different process this season, and dip the nuts in Chloride of lime. Those who have used this method of curing in other places claim for it superiority over the sulphur process.

The Walnut Growers' Association is composed of all the prominent growers of this valuable article of commerce in close proximity to Saticoy, and a few at some

distance, but who are in the walnut belt. The people of Ventura County are learning by experience what their immediate sections will produce and are planting accordingly. They have learned that no location will grow all kinds of products on a paying basis.

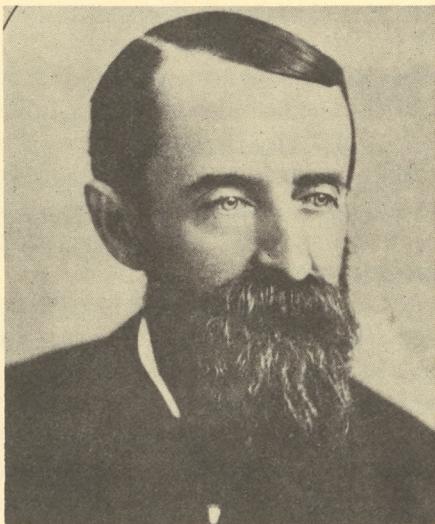
Many have spent years in getting orchards to bearing, only to find that their location was not suited to that particular kind of a tree. In many cases they have gone on year after year, pruning and cultivating, hoping for a reward some time; others have had the courage to uproot these valueless orchards and set out instead varieties that would give returns.

The newcomer will profit by this experience and will not experiment. He will know what he wishes to raise and select his home where it grows to perfection. Already, because of this diversity of climate and productions within a small area, and because each can choose the location best suited to his wants, it has become a proverb that every resident thinks his location the only choice one in Ventura County.

The old residents of Saticoy (which is the name applied to a considerable district as well as to the town) have found the walnut to be a desirable tree to grow here, and in consequence a large acreage has been planted.

The walnut is a long lived tree in favorable situations. It roots deep and requires an abundance of good water near the surface. In places where it has not access to a natural supply it must be irrigated. It does not do well close by the sea, and trees planted near the ocean bend away from it, while the apricot throws its branches out toward the ocean and leans in the direction of its strong breezes.

The following gentlemen are officers of the Walnut Growers' Association: J. L. Crane, President; John Dickenson, Secretary; Directors: J. M. Sharp and John Dickenson. Following are the names of some of the members: Messrs. G. Good, W. Layne, E. Hawley, R. G. Pardee, E. E. Huntley, G. W. Faulkner, E. L. Gardner, and J. A. Kelsey.



W. D. F. Richards

All of these gentlemen have walnut orchards and the Association shipped from its depot twenty-five carloads in 1897, seventeen carloads in 1898, with a rainfall of less than five inches, and many of the orchards not irrigated. It is estimated that the Association will have this season thirty carloads and that sixty carloads will be handled by them.

Between the twin Saticoys, which are only a half mile apart, on a gentle slope are found the famous Saticoy Springs. They were purchased by the Southern Pacific Railroad on its advent into this county and the water is piped from them to their grounds for use. It is a pleasant and romantic spot, the ground slopes gently to the long, broad level on which Saticoy stands. Water willows grow densely because of the moisture and make a miniature jungle, very enticing on a warm day. Large curbings have been placed around several of the springs, short iron

tubes sunk, and on lifting the covers one can watch the cool water bubbling constantly and flowing away in the system of pipes. It is claimed these Springs have beneficial medicinal qualities.

Saticoy is an Indian word and is said by some authorities to mean "Springing Water." Before Americans came here an Indian tribe of Saticoys had their village on the site of the towns now named for them. After the invasion of their domain by the Spaniards, being of a docile temperament, many of them were taught some of the arts of civilization by the patient Padres. The remains of an adobe house occupied by a Saticoy Chief were to be seen here only a few years ago. Over its historic foundation the wheels of progress run daily, for the Southern Pacific track passes over the threshold where the moccasined feet of another people "whose ways are not our ways," softly trod. Some of the American pioneers remember having seen remnants of this tribe come at stated seasons to re-visit their old haunts, and carry away with them roots and herbs that grow beside the Springs. It is a fact much to be regretted that the handi-work of those who occupied the land before us should be ruthlessly destroyed.

The Springs extend diagonally for more than half a mile across 150 acres of land and could be made to furnish a large amount of water for irrigation. Indeed the flow of water from the brow of the mesa operates a hydraulic ram on the bottom lands nearby. There is sufficient water running to irrigate a considerable acreage. The large vegetable gardens near the town are irrigated from this source. The amount of water that might be developed in the Saticoy ciénega for irrigating land is still an unknown quantity, for the simple reason that no competent hydraulic engineer has ever drawn plans that have been put into operation. In other parts of Southern California, ciénegas furnish a large supply of water; in some cases sufficient to irrigate thousands of acres. The usual plan is to cut a canal through the ciénega as deep as possible with lateral canals and carry the water by gravity

to lands a considerable distance below. Another method is to put in a submerged flume. Cienegas are made to yield a reliable and constant supply of water in this way. In seasons like the present, in addition to draining the cienegas, pumping is resorted to, to increase the flow. The Saticoy Springs were originally the property of Rev. S. T. Wells, and were included in the 300 acres sold by him for \$45,000. It is to be hoped that some day this cienega will be developed by competent engineers in a scientific manner. In years of deficient rainfall the county needs all the water that such sources can be made to furnish.

The Saticoy Water Company was organized in 1897 with fifteen stockholders and a capital stock of \$15,000. That the people in the immediate vicinity felt this to be a paying investment is evidenced by the stockholders all being residents here with two exceptions. Shortly after the organization of the company, a well was sunk near Saticoy in the artesian belt, which has given a constant supply of 36 miner's inches ever since the flow began. It is a noteworthy fact that the amount has not diminished in the least through the two extremely dry seasons just past.

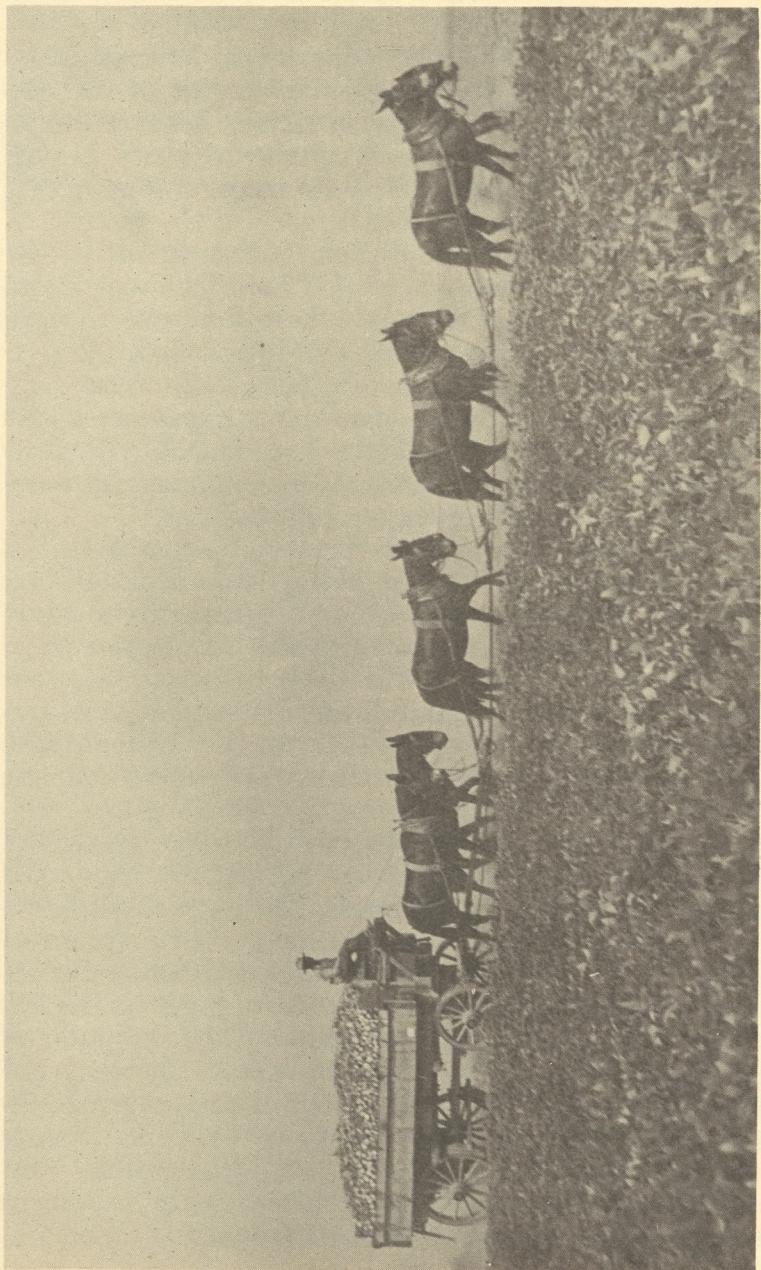
The well discharges into a reservoir of 5000 gallons capacity, and is pumped by two 30 horsepower engines through three and one-third miles of 6-inch pipe to a large storage reservoir at an elevation of 225 feet, which holds two million gallons. From this large and substantially built receptacle, the distributing pipes are 4-inch iron pipes laid to the county road, a distance of a quarter of a mile. There are three and one-half miles of pipe laid and owned by the Saticoy Water Company, but recently sold to Ventura County for sprinkling purposes. Water is furnished free by the company for 15 years from date of sale. Along this line, tanks and hydrants are erected at convenient intervals, and the sprinklers water the streets at night during the dry months thus connecting with and making a continuous sprinkling system from Ventura to Santa Paula, a distance of 16 miles.. The generosity of the Saticoy Water Company in thus liber-

ally supporting public enterprise is to be highly commended.

The Saticoy Water Company began successful operation in May 1898, but the gasoline engine of 300 gallons capacity per minute has not been deemed strong enough to safely lift so large a column of water to such an altitude, so that now a fine new steam engine of 450 gallon capacity is being placed.

Along the line for a distance of three miles, the ranch owners on either side of the road have connected with the water main and have put in hydrants in yard and house, and thus have water handy for domestic purposes, and to freshen lawn and flower beds. The company furnishes water to its patrons for house use at the rate of 50 cents per 1000 gallons. For 100,000 gallons or more at 40 cents per 1000, but for irrigating purposes the charges are but 20 cents per 1000 gallons.

Those who have resided in this vicinity since its early settlement, especially along the thoroughfare known as "the telegraph road" will easily call to mind the depth of dust and the interminable ruts that used to tire the traveler toiling slowly along between the towns of Santa Paula and Ventura. Trees, plants, and buildings seemed always laden with soil from the close of the Spring rains until the downpour in Autumn washed the face of Nature. What a charming contrast is now presented! A smooth, dustless wagon-way; trees green and glassy in the sunlight; buildings clean and fresh as if just from the hands of the painter. The drive from Santa Paula to Ventura is not now a penance, but a dream of delight, for despite dry seasons and other drawbacks incident to this world in which we sojourn, progress has left her footprints upon every acre between. It is a matter of congratulation that we have among us men of money and public-spirit enough to use their means in promoting enterprises that are of such immense value to the county at large. Our communities should rejoice, if capital thus invested at a venture, brings dividends at all commensurate with the time and money expended.



Harvesting Sugar Beets

One of the best known men in Ventura County is John Madison of West Saticoy, dealer in geared and pumping Aermotors, steel and wooden towers, galvanized iron tanks, the Lambert gasoline engine, hardware, tinware and pumps. He also deals in windmill fixtures, casing, pipe, and water supply goods of every description. In connection with wells, pumps and windmills, Mr. Madison is well known all over the county, and has no competitor. His services are in constant demand. Farmers find it a great convenience when they want to put in a pumping plant, to employ a man who is competent to sink a well, supply pump, tank and windmill, and turn the plant over to the owner in running order. He has a fine well boring outfit, and is ready to contract at reasonable prices to sink a well and erect a tank and windmill. The numerous windmills around Saticoy were nearly all furnished by Mr. Madison.

#### WEST SATICOY

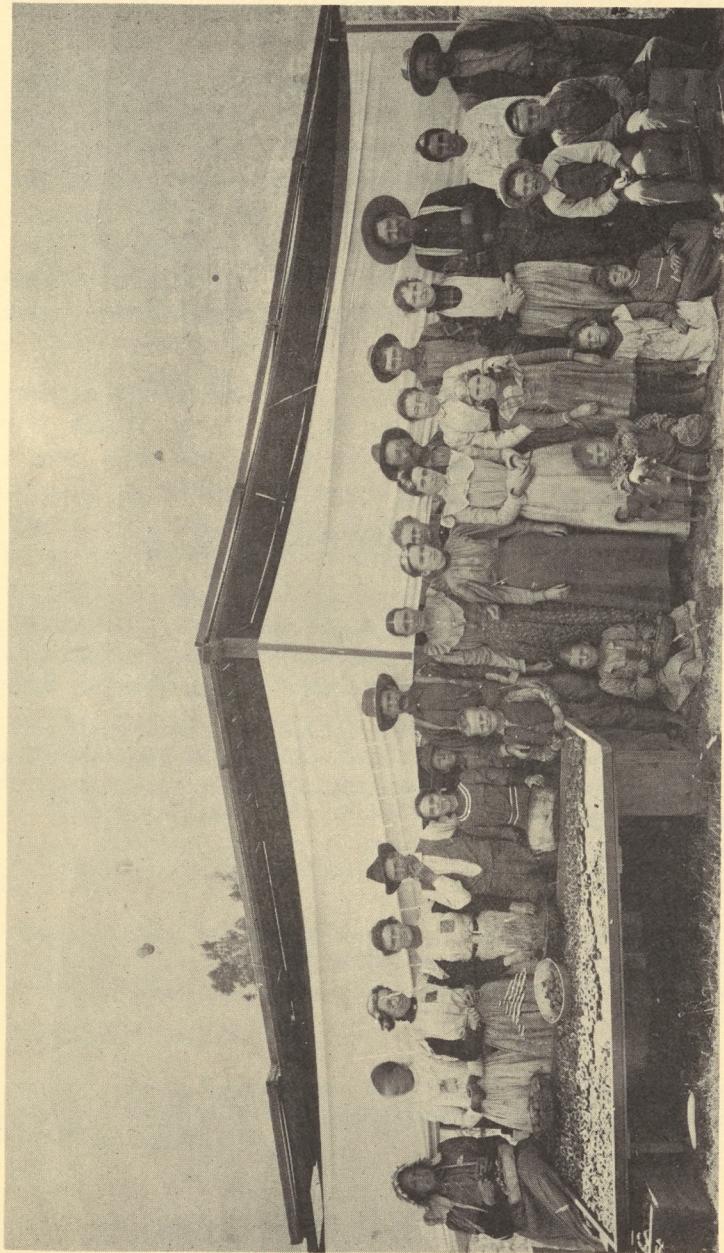
West Saticoy is the Knob Hill of these thriving settlements. Pretty grounds filled with shrubbery, trees, and flowers are on every hand. The scenery is charming. To the north the mountains bend away like a bow, to the south stretches the valleys of Las Posas and Colonia, and at its feet shine the shifting sands of the river Santa Clara. During the winter months when rains are frequent and abundant, the gray waters of this stream spread afar and wrench the water willows from their insecure foothold gained in seasons of drought.

No bridge spans the river at this point and none is needed, for traffic is carried on mostly during the summer and autumn months when the bed of the river is dry. To those who know only the streams of the middle and eastern portions of the United States, California rivers are an anomaly. There, every brook that runs across a roadway must be bridged or communication ceases. Here, many times the water-courses merely furnish a pathway for surface waters to reach the sea; and when not fed by springs and streams, pass away with the clouds of winter.

A few miles to the west of this pretty hamlet one may see the sparkle of the Pacific. Each day it sends its fresh and bracing breezes to cool and cheer. In the sun one finds it often uncomfortably warm, but when sheltered from the wind, shade is delightful. Woe to him who would have both breeze and shade for he will soon find it too chill for either comfort or health..

The elevation of West Saticoy above sea level is about 200 feet. Though a village of farms, it has two good church edifices, a Methodist and a Presbyterian, where, each Sunday divine worship is conducted. There is a very beautiful schoolhouse which was erected here in 1892 to accommodate the students from both towns. This is one of the handsomest school buildings in the county, and cost with the lot on which it stands, \$10,500. When the school grounds are set out to trees, and flowers and shrubbery ornament them as in many of our county school yards, there will be no more beautiful public building in Ventura County. There are two large apartments and a vestibule, with ample cloak rooms on the ground. These are the only ones occupied at present, and they are well furnished to give good schooling to the 100 pupils who now occupy them. A good organ adds music to the interest and assists in discipline. On the first floor are two more large study rooms well equipped but as yet unused. The citizens here were wise in building for the future, for when the population is increased by eastern home-seekers, it will find space adequate for educational facilities for some years to come.

West Saticoy has a good general merchandise store, a first-class feedmill, a paint and hardware store, a blacksmith shop, laundry, and postoffice. Just outside the townsite is a well from which water is piped to the residences. Those who contemplate removing to California from other states, and those who come here from other sections of the state, should take pains to ascertain about the water before choosing a home. In many localities injurious minerals make the water unfit for drinking pur-



Apricot Pitting Crew, 1890s

poses. At West Saticoy one finds an abundance of good water.

The soil here is rich alluvial and has been rapidly deposited, as is evidenced by the many curious specimens that have been found in digging wells. In one dug quite recently were found some 60 feet below the surface the leg bones of a horse. Forty feet down in another excavation portions of a petrified gopher were brought out. Below the gravel of the river bed, when digging for water in the adjacent banks, charcoal and curious shells have been unearthed.

In writing of West Saticoy a word of tribute it due W. D. Richards, the founder of the town. When the Southern Pacific Railroad survey was made, this enterprising gentleman, who had extensive holdings, placed some of it on the market in small lots and thus the pretty little village began. Mr. Richards has one of the most elegant homes of Ventura County. He came to Saticoy in 1868 and recalls many of the old pioneers there, some of them are still living. These names are familiar ones to the other old residents of the county: Judge Wason, first County Judge; Wm. Baker, Reverend Bristol, Prof. Harmon, and E. A. Duval. Mr. Richards, as well as Rev. Bristol, was one of the committee appointed to organize Ventura County.

## *Membership*

### LIFE

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds

### SUSTAINING

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

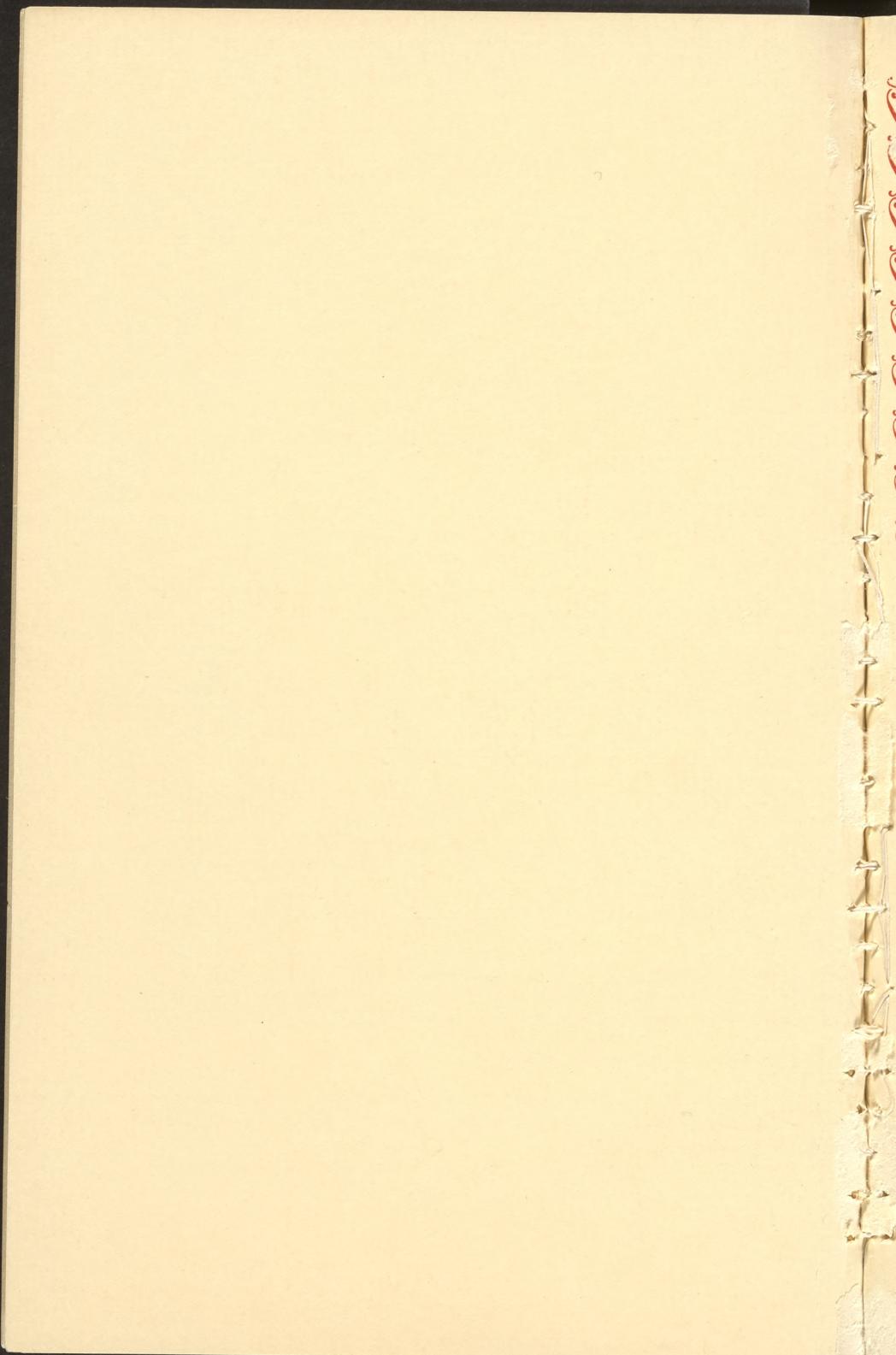
*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

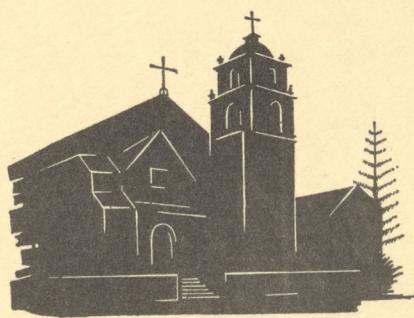
*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Successor to John J. MacGregor. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

*Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

May 1964

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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FERGUS FAIRBANKS	R. G. PERCY
MRS. WALTER H. HOFFMAN, JR.	H. M. BORCHARD
MRS. D. A. CAMERON	CARL PHLEGER

The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the staff includes Mrs. D. A. Cameron, F. L. Fairbanks, J. H. Morrison and R. G. Percy.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Six hundred twenty-five copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

# The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly

Vol. IX, No. 3

May, 1964

## *Contents*

ELIJAH BAILEY FAIRBANKS

VENTURA COUNTY'S RUSSIAN BELL

PISGAH GRANDE

## *Notice*

Charles F. Outland has resigned as Chairman of the Editorial Committee with the completion of the February issue. The Officers and Directors of the Society expressed their appreciation of Mr. Outland's nine years of work which has made the *Quarterly* such a success. With this issue he is succeeded as Editor by Grant W. Heil, who has been a member of the staff since its beginning.

Ted Fairbanks is best fitted to narrate the story of his father. The dedication of the El Camino Real bell of Camulos has occasioned the history of another bell there by Wally Smith, the historian of the del Valle family. Mrs. Lea of the Simi Valley *Sun* did the original research on Ventura County's colony for derelicts.

## ELIJAH BAILEY FAIRBANKS

*By F. L. FAIRBANKS*

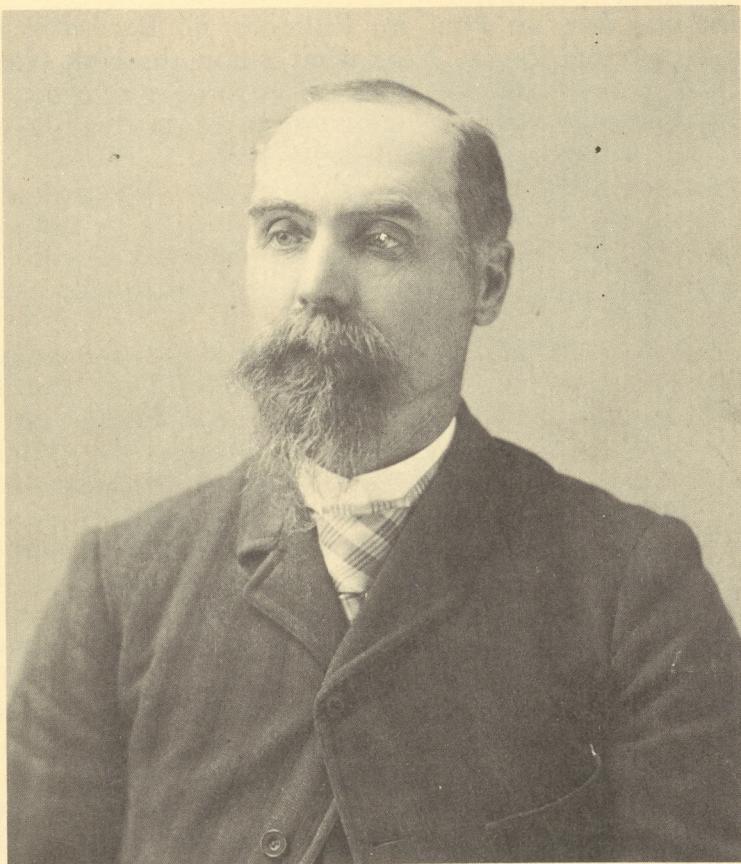
My father, Elijah Bailey Fairbanks, was born on July 28, 1845 in the southern part of New York State, the son of Theophilis and Susan Fairbanks, number twelve among their fourteen children.

He was slightly past one year of age when his parents decided to go West, the place chosen being southern Wisconsin. He was brought up into early manhood near what was later Waupun. It was here he went to school and worked for the railroad. In 1871 he was married to my mother, Martha Linn, a daughter of Richard Linn, a farmer-preacher, whose home was in Table Rock in Pawnee County. It was there my father and mother set up house-keeping, it was there my older brother was born in 1872 and it was there I arrived on the scene on April 12, 1876.

Father had been planning for some time to come out to the Pacific Coast, and shortly after my birth he started. He had not made up his mind where we were going to live, so he stayed briefly in the State of Washington, then moved on to Oregon. He was not satisfied with either state so he continued on to California. An older sister of my mother and her husband, Will Linn, had bought a few acres on Ventura Avenue and were very happy; so my father stopped there and decided that Ventura County was where he wanted to live.

So that was named as our future home, and my mother started on the train for San Francisco with me in her arms and my brother trailing. There was no railroad in this County, so she made the rest of her trip by steamer. The home my father had secured for us was on Fir Street, just opposite what was then called the Plaza; and there we made our home until April, 1881 when he took charge of the wharf and warehouses for Hueneme Wharf Company as assistant wharfinger. The wharfinger proper was head of the office.

During the time he lived in Ventura, Father first worked for L. M. Sifford, father of Frank Sifford. I believe



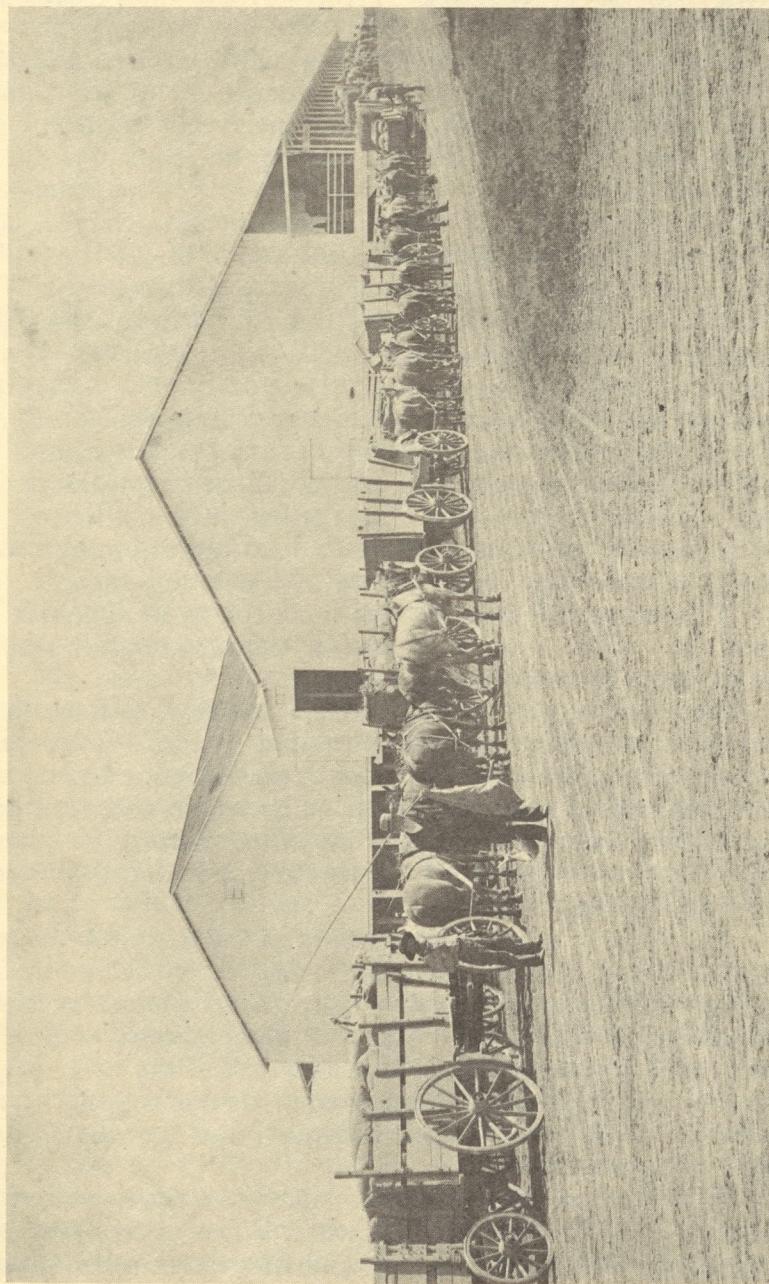
Elijah B. Fairbanks

Sifford himself was City Marshal, but principally he had a trucking outfit with which he hauled freight for the merchants. The stores got their supplies either by steamer from San Francisco or by means of a trip to Newhall, then the terminus of the railroad or at least the nearest station to Ventura. That was about a 60-mile trip each way on a very bad road, where you had to cross Castaic Creek, Sespe Creek, Piru Creek and Santa Paula Creek, driving four horses and a large wagon. I don't know how long the round trip took, but probably three or four days according to weather conditions. That was what Father did for a time.

There was then no Piru, no Fillmore, no Bardsdale and almost no Santa Paula. Near what is now the Fish Hatchery was a store and post office. The store was owned by Herman Haines, who was later shot in Santa Paula by Joe Dye, one of the big desperados of southern California. Father said he often camped there over night. The post office was given the name of Scenega, as requested by the postmaster who was evidently not accustomed to the word Cienega. I have seen old envelopes with the misspelled name several times.

When Ventura County was formed in 1873 we had only three supervisors: J. A. Conaway, James Daly and Dr. C. W. Thacker. The Cienega school was located on the west end of the Conaway property. Most of the children in that locality lived on the south side of the Santa Clara River, and they had to ford the river to get to school. I suppose that was one time when they started to divide Ventura County by the rivers. As you have probably read in history of the county, Thacker always opposed putting in a jail or any other building near Ventura because he said the center of the county belonged on the other side of the river. The Guibersons made up the bulk of the pupils. After her mother's death at the time she was nine years old, Mrs. Hattie V. King told me she lived with her aunt, Mrs. Guiberson, at the east end of Stringtown Ditch. Conaway had a good-sized family. One of his daughters married Hugh Warring, Supervisor from this District from 1903-1907. Many years ago one of Warring's boys told me a mysterious thing about how he got his place up at Buckhorn. All that ranch cost him was a revolver he traded off to some man, who filed on that land. The man agreed to give up his rights and let them have the place because of his indebtedness.

About the time Father had lived in Ventura for a year the Republicans nominated him for City Marshal. James Daly was the candidate of the Democrats, a man who was so popular that if Father had lived in Ventura longer he would have refused to run against him. He had several different occupations until 1880, when the three More Brothers, who owned all of Santa Rosa Island, hired him to boss a crew who were to build a wharf on the island. One



Grain wagons at the Hueneme Warehouse.

of the Mores, T. Wallace More, was the man killed by squatters near Fillmore in 1877. During the time he was on the island, the only meat the men had to eat was mutton; and I might say by the way that during all of the future years while I was at home, I never knew any mutton to be brought into the house. Father felt he had eaten his share. His work on the island was so satisfactory that Hueneme Wharf Company hired him as Assistant Wharfinger, and he stayed with them for twenty-five years, in fact until the coming of the railroad which took away their business.

The work he did on Santa Rosa Island in building the wharf was put in good stead later, as the Hueneme Wharf Company had to replace the piles yearly that had been damaged by the teredos; and not only that, but at a later date he supervised the building of two other wharves in Santa Barbara County. I do not recall the exact places but both were north of Point Conception. Also, it helped in the repairs of the Montalvo-El Rio bridge after the flood, which washed away the south end of the county bridge.

The house we lived in was built for us by Thomas R. Bard. My older sister was born in Ventura but the rest of the children were born in this house.

The first barley in the Valley was said to have been planted by Christian and Ed Borchard in 1867. For a time that was the main crop, the grain from which made up the chief business of the warehouses. The wheat and corn that was delivered was a small item in comparison to the barley. Some wool was delivered at an early date. Other items were negligible.

In the early nineties the coming of the lima bean caused quite a drop in the barley receipts; and in the later nineties the sugar beet caused another drop in warehouse receipts. However the Simi, Las Posas and Conejo continued with barley and wheat until the railroad south of the river began to carry much of each. Beginning with the coming of the railroad, the business of the warehouses and the wharf gradually dropped.

There was no dairy south of the river when we moved there, so most of the families owned a cow unless they had a neighbor who possessed one and had extra milk. Some,

like ourselves, had two cows. When a cow was dry, you had to find someone who was willing to divide with you. For instance, A. Levy, who had four children, always looked to us for milk when his cow dried up. When I was about ten years old, I was leaving milk at his house. He was smoking a cigar on the front porch; his wife detested cigars, so he had to go outside. A few days before that a traveling group of actors had started south to fulfill an engagement at Santa Monica, but at the steamer's first stop they had been given a telegram cancelling the engagement. A passenger told the manager that they might possibly rent a hall at Hueneme and avoid being idle. They did so, and that evening was the time for the first play. Mr. Levy said to me, "Are you going to the show tonight?" I said I hadn't heard about it, so he pulled a half dollar out of his pocket and told me to go. I thanked him and was leaving when he said, "Is Charley (my older brother) going?" My answer was the same as before so he handed me another 50c piece and said, "Tell him to go." The play was East Lynne, a prominent number on the stage at that time. That was not the last time I was under obligation to Mr. Levy.

My father nearly always kept a couple of pigs, as the feed cost him nothing. Rats and mice were terribly destructive, and the barley got pretty dirty. As the fanning mills were always worked by hand then and barley being cheap it did not pay to fan it. A. J. Salisbury, who was the overlord in the Hueneme Wharf Company then, told 'Banks, as he called my father, to take all of it that he wanted. It was my job to soak the barley for a couple of days and feed the pigs. If I forgot, I was in disgrace.

One of the receipts at the warehouses was the hogs, which were usually shipped to San Francisco. The big shippers were usually Dominick McGrath from the south side of the river and Chrisman & Willoughby from Aliso Canyon. Of course there were others in smaller lots. I think Father enjoyed handling the hogs when they were being loaded more than he did the grain. There was a chute for them with only two wheels. The end next to the steamer (or schooner) was up in the air; and when the chute was full of hogs, the end on the wharf was lifted up and the hogs were



F. W. Gerberding, Chas. Greenwell, O. E. Gerberding, H. Johnson,  
Bart Pitts, E. B. Fairbanks, C. Beckley and L. S. Beckley at the Hueneme  
Warehouse office, 1889.

dumped down on the boat. They were rarely hurt, but one would occasionally jump overboard and strike out for China. A row boat soon followed, however, and the hog was turned for the beach. About 1890 we had moved out to the Boronda place, a mile east of town; and while I suppose we were at least a mile and a half from the end of the wharf, we could hear him plainly yelling at the hogs.

It must have been about 1885 that the schooner California broke her mooring lines and wound up on the beach. A tug was sent down from San Francisco to get her afloat, but without success. A crew of men then was sent down from the bay city to make repairs. After they had been completed, a tug came down to pull her off, but it required additional help. So about 48 horses and mules were strung out in a long line attached to a large hawser which ran through a pulley on the head mooring, and all pulling together set her back in the ocean. The Captain left a large row boat in

charge of Father for use of the Wharf Company, which came to good service in time of flood, probably in 1889. During a big flood word came that the man looking after the McGrath hogs had been forced to climb a tree to keep from being carried to the ocean, and the hogs were being carried off rapidly. The Wharf Company sent a crew with the California's boat on a wagon, and after much maneuvering the man was saved.

There was a large slough about a mile east of town; and when the ocean tides were high, the water gradually crept closer and closer to the town. The Wharf Company usually took the responsibility of emptying the slough, so Father was sent over with the men and horses necessary to open it at low tide. They started a ditch with ploughs, and the water pressure did the rest.

Father was a very strong man in his early days at the wharf. In a heavy rain he would sometimes pick up Otto Gerberding, the brother-in-law and secretary of Thomas R. Bard, and carry him through the water to his office. I have seen the water around that office about two feet deep. One of the crew working at the warehouses told me that one day he saw three men trying to get a car back on the track, and they were doing such a poor job at it that Father picked up one corner of the car and put it back alone.

It is very difficult to say of what my father's duties consisted. The Wharf Company had a large room filled with tools of every kind and description which were used in those days. He seemed able to use all of them; and as he was held responsible for all repairs, he needed to know how. He had a great facility in using them. Of course the most important was the replacing of piles eaten by the teredo, a small animal that is a constant threat to wharves. Bart Pitts ran the donkey engine, but Father was always on hand. So far as I can recall there was never a serious accident when driving piles. He had an uncle who was a builder and contractor. This uncle had offered to take him and make an architect of him. I don't know why the offer was not accepted, but I suppose it was a restraining hand at home. They needed him on the farm.

Father was often called on for unusual jobs. For ex-



Steamer, Coos Bay, and E. B. Fairbanks.

ample, in 1884 and 1888, at the time of the presidential campaign, people exhibited more enthusiasm than they do to-day. One was the pounding of powder on an anvil and thus making a big racket. This job was almost invariably unloaded on him by the Republicans. Also, they used Roman candles and sky rockets. I think it was on the latter date that someone working with a Roman candle unwittingly shot it up under Father's coat and set fire to it. He was good natured, strong and capable, so he was often drafted.

He was quite a favorite with the steamboat captains. If he was at home, he started for the end of the wharf when he heard the whistle blow; and was there by the time the steamer was ready to throw her ropes to tie up. The steamers usually whistled as they rounded the lighthouse point. And speaking of the lighthouse, their supplies were always brought down on a boat referred to as a "tender." They stopped as close as they could to the lighthouse, and the sailors rowed to the beach and made delivery of the supplies. Had they tied up at the wharf, there would have been a fee to pay; and Uncle Sam was evidently more thrifty then than now.

There was a mystery here that I have never heard explained satisfactorily. About a quarter of a mile from the beach and south from the light, there was a spring from which fresh water was constantly flowing. I was told that with the building of the harbor that the flow of water was shut off. I suppose it must have been a draft on the county water supply, although I knew one man who said he believed the water came from the Sierras. From time to time we could see whales spouting from the wharf, and occasionally a water spout was visible. About 1885 one of those spouts came ashore and passed over Saviers Road, scattering fish as it went.

A. J. Salisbury, the big boss, was pretty crusty. If he was in a bad humor he usually swore, sometimes at my father. He never apologized directly. He would merely wait until the next day, and say, "Banks, you'd better take my team and spring wagon and take a couple of days off; go up to the Casitas and camp out." In an attempt to get rid of the rats and mice he tried everything. Finally, he hired his

son Ed to go out and buy some cats; he would pay 25c for every cat he could get and bring to the warehouse. Ed did a very good job at it; but when his father discovered that the cats all went back home and he bought the same cats day after day, there was an explosion. Rumor had it that Ed felt a horse whip, but I can't say.

When we first moved to Hueneme, during hot weather there were many people from the interior who drove to the beach and camped there, possibly for a week or more. Occasionally they would take a cow along with them. That, of course, was before the Rincon was open to traffic. There was a one-teacher school on the south side of Broad Street, about two blocks west of Fourth Street. Charles T. Meredith was the teacher when we first arrived. He was afterwards Principal at Santa Paula, County Superintendent of Schools, and later state Superintendent of Public Instruction. Samuel T. Black was another man that we had here at the High School at Ventura that was a state superintendent before him. There was no church until about 1885, when the Methodists built one, followed by the Baptists and the Presbyterians. The first Sunday School was a union affair, held in the schoolhouse.

I think it must have been when I was 7 or 8 years old that a family named Dewar moved into the house across the street from us. One day when it had been raining and the weather was bitterly cold, all of the puddles in the streets were covered with ice. Mrs. Dewar said to the numerous boys on that corner, "If you boys will collect enough of that ice, I'll make some ice cream for you." She had nothing but a large bowl to use, but managed to make the ice cream. That was my first taste of ice cream. No one in the town carried ice, not even the butcher.

It must have been trying in my early life for a man as husky as my father to have a boy like me who was always having something happen to him. When I was five years old, I had a case of pneumonia. There was no doctor and no nurse in Hueneme at that time; so my uncle, Will Linn, who had served in the hospitals during the Civil War, came over and pulled me through. When I was nine I had a case of blood poison, which caused me to lose my finger, and



D. T. Perkins and E. B. Fairbanks, 1895.

almost my life. By that time Hueneme had a doctor, O. V. Sessions; and he pulled me through. The only advantage I had by losing that finger was that I was never permitted to milk the cows. Again, I had penumonia at thirteen.

On two different occasions Father was borrowed from the Wharf Company to boss a crew of men who were working for Greenwell & Donlon: first, on the Rincon board road; and second, in repairs to the first bridge across the river damaged by high water. Charlie Greenwell was state senator for this district, and Charlie Donlon seemed to be almost everything else over there and wound up being the first president of the First National Bank at Oxnard. When I was in school, he was one of the big boys and I was one of the little kids.

About 1891 or 1892 Father filed on a homestead in the upper Sespe, but he did not prove out on it as Uncle Sam decided to set it aside. He was given scrip for it but did nothing further with it. The first place he ever owned was on Las Posas Road, a house and five acres, for which he paid \$1,900.00.

In 1904 the Republicans in the County were engaged

in a family scrap, to settle whether Thomas R. Bard should have the County support for United States Senator, or whether Henry T. Oxnard should be supported for that office. David T. Perkins was a candidate for Assemblyman in support of Bard, and Major J. A. Drifill for Henry T. Oxnard. At that time the American Beet Sugar Company had leased the Patterson Ranch, some of which was in the Hueneme precinct where Bard voted; and the Oxnard people were anxious to carry it. They had hired Harvey Branscomb, who was referred to as the Calabasas' Bad Boy, and about two hundred men to work on the ranch. They registered to vote, but unfortunately for them too late, it was said. They all marched in to vote at the same time, Harvey Branscomb leading and carrying a pitchfork with the tines ahead. Father was the Judge in that precinct, and Branscomb pushed the tines against his tummy; but when he found that there was no retreat, he gave up and none of the men voted. Bard carried the precinct, also the County, but was not re-elected.

This was about the end of Father's active life. There was so little going on at the wharf and warehouses that in 1908 he moved to Fillmore, bought himself a team and helped me run a 20-acre orchard, which M. L. Wolff and I owned in Bardsdale.

He died on October 10, 1918 as the result of an accident.

## VENTURA COUNTY'S RUSSIAN BELL

By WALLACE E. SMITH

If your Russian is adequate, you might be able to read the dozen words on the 168-year-old cracked bell which evokes so much interest at Rancho Camulos:

*Goda mtea gen varia lit-sei kolkol na ostovie kadi velenyan arkhemandr as-pha.*

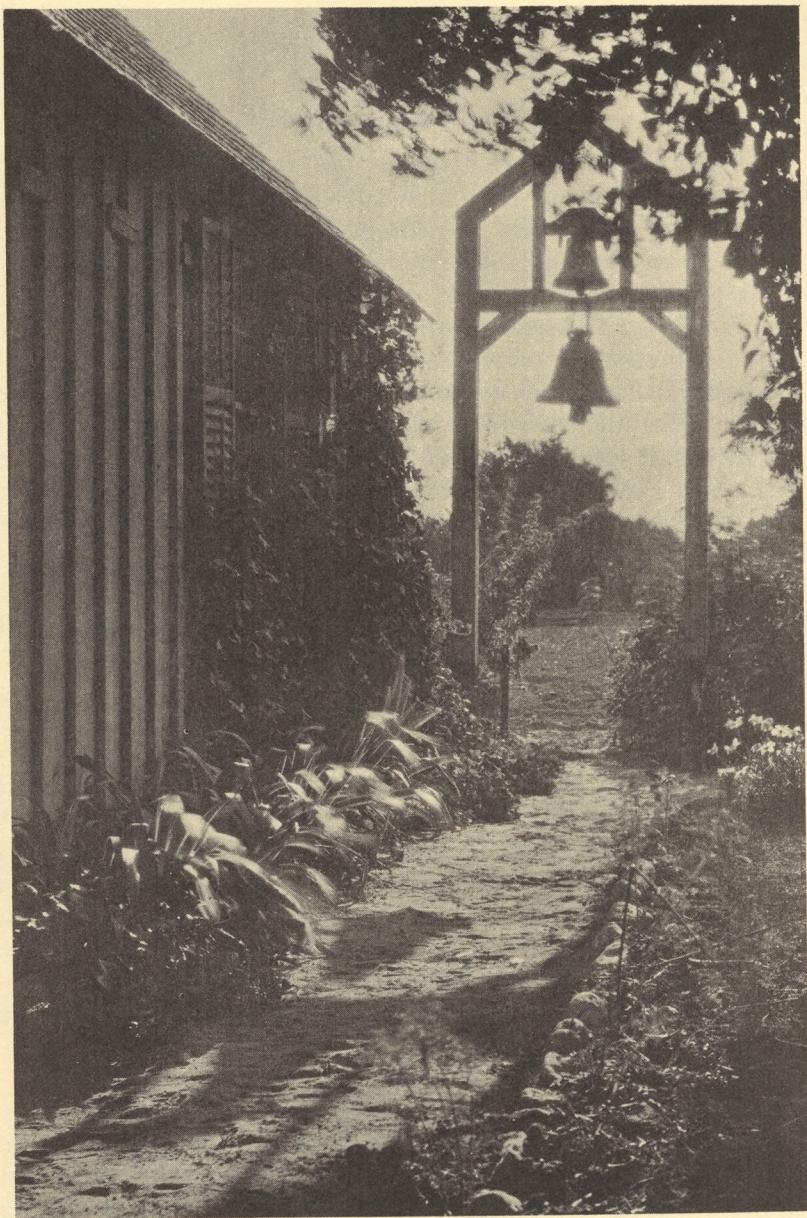
But if your Russian is no better than ours, you will have to take somebody's word on just what coppersmith Vasili Shaposhnikoff had in mind when he cast the bell on the island of Kodiak, Alaska back in 1796. It once was part of a triumverate of bells which dominated the garden beside the path to Helen Hunt Jackson's immortalized chapel, the tiny chapel which figures so prominently in her controversial novel of the Eighties, *Ramona*.

When Josefa Asencion Rosa Lilia del Valle Forster left Camulos for the outside world, she took with her one of the three bells as a memento of her years in Ventura County. The largest of the three she left behind.

Why a Russian bell on an early California ranch?

The late Elise Smith Gaylord del Valle, widow of Ul-piano, last of his generation to call Camulos home, thought all three bells had a common origin. She once told me at her spacious palisades home in Santa Monica that all three bells were cast by Russian craftsmen and traded to California Indians for otter skins. It is true, of course, that Russian furriers plied their trade as far south on the coast as the Channel Islands off what is now Ventura County. But painstaking research by a determined Los Angeles widow, Alice Harriman, has involved Don Luis Antonio Arguello, California governor from 1822 to 1825, in the larger bell's journeys to Mission San Fernando and finally to Camulos.

The ranch as we now know it was non-existent. One small adobe storehouse, often filled with grain destined for the mission at San Fernando, stood on a slope half a mile south of the present Castaic Junction, on the south bank of the Santa Clara del Sur. A second adobe stood on the spot now occupied by the rambling 28-room ranch house. It



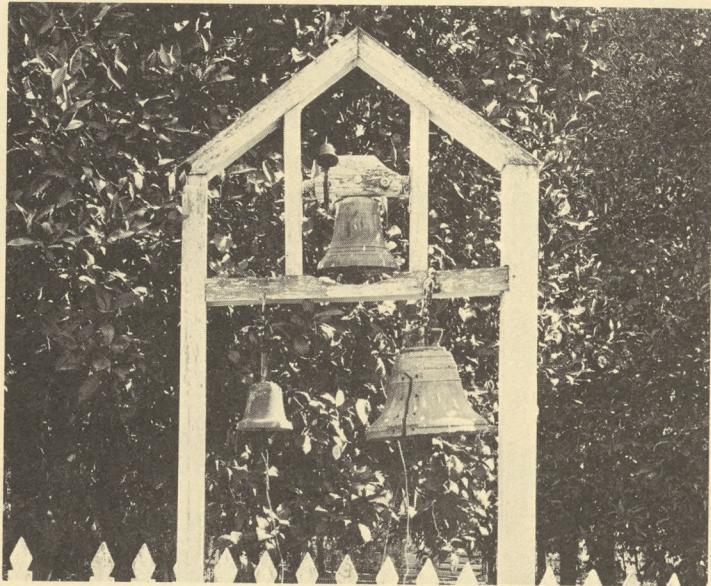
Two remaining bells by the chapel.

had four rooms and walls four feet through. Fields which later nurtured horses and the *Cattle on the thousand hills* for the del Valles, father and son and grandson, at that time provided grist for San Fernando's mills and were a part of that mission's far-flung holdings. It was this tie-in with Mission San Fernando which eventually led to the presence of the now-cracked bell at Camulos.

Antonio Seferino del Valle, who was given 48,000 acres known as Rancho San Francisco by Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado 125 years ago, had overseen the downfall of Mission San Fernando: its secularization. Then what was more natural than for Antonio to take along some souvenirs of his mission days when he decided to move to his Santa Barbara adobe and ranch his Santa Clara Valley holdings? Just how many of the items now at Camulos were on the inventories of Mission San Fernando would make interesting research; but we know only that the bell is one of them.

Antonio inventoried the mission on several occasions as overseer of its secularization; and the bell appears on his lists in the 1830's, but not on an inventory taken by Father Blas Ordaz, last of the Franciscans at San Fernando, in March of 1849.

When Antonio converted the former Mission San Fernando lands north of what is now the Weldon Grade into his Rancho San Francisco, he retained Jose Salazar as his overseer and established him in the former storehouse at Castaic. Following Antonio's death, a little, wizened old man at 53, his widow, Jacoba Feliz, married Jose just two years later; and it was they who welcomed the remnants of the Jayhawkers to the floor of the valley after their harrowing Death Valley experiences in 1850. No del Valles lived on the ranch between 1841, when Antonio died, and 1861 when his eldest son Ygnacio Ramon de Jesus Eleodoro del Valle moved to the present ranch house with his second wife, two children and eight orphans. Presumably the Russian bell was buried during those years or stored under lock and key in one of the adobes, probably the one now occupied by the Edwin Burgers. Ygnacio converted this four-room storehouse into a spacious 20-room home (since enlarged



Three bells.

to 28) with Indian labor, the same Indians whose huts surrounded the adobe and whose fathers lived on the site when Antonio first laid eyes on the land during a punitive expedition against rebel Mission Indians in 1824.

Each of the three bells had its special purpose in the daily routine of the del Valles and their ranch workers. One of the two smaller bells called the servants, and the other summoned the ranch children to their lessons under the tutelage of Victor Mondran and his successors. The veranda classroom with its hard wooden benches was one of California's first truly integrated schools, for the Indian youngsters, some of whom still adhered stubbornly to the religious beliefs of an earlier non-Catholic generation, were taught alongside those of the del Valles. Each of the three bells boasted its own distinctive voice, so they served admirably their three purposes.

The larger bell was used daily to call the family and ranch hands to their prayers at the nearby chapel. Once a month its deeper voice sounded across the fields and rever-

berated from the foothills to call friends and neighbors to Mass by Father Juan Comapla of San Buenaventura, or some other visiting priest. Camulos was a regular stopover for priests traveling between the missions at San Fernando and San Buenaventura. Although El Camino Real was designed to provide overnight stops for its travelers one day's journey apart, this particular stretch of the King's Highway was in need of an in-between resting place. Camulos and its generous and hospitable mistress, Senora Ysabel de Varela del Valle, filled this need. Whenever Dona Ysabel learned that some footsore priest was en route from Santa Barbara to San Fernando, she would dispatch a servant with food and wine to be cached at the foot or in the branches of the sycamore still growing at the confluence of Sycamore and Hall roads and Highway 126. This would restore the good father's strength and spirits for the grueling walk ahead.

Homeless and friendless children of three generations found love and shelter at Camulos, and it was considered somewhat of an honor to be invited to a bull's head barbecue or some other gala festivity at the ranch. As many as 50 rancheros could sometimes be found at Ygnacio's table during the roundups of cattle or sheep. The Senora, not one to miss such an opportunity although her husband and sons sometimes chided her about it, saw to it that all present answered the call of the San Fernando Mission bell at dusk each evening.

Churchmen knew, of course, that the bell was at Camulos long before Alice Harriman set out to decipher its fading inscription that summer of 1920; and they suspected from the crude cross and the words *de Sn Fer* that it had once hung in the tower at San Fernando. But they knew little or nothing of its origin, and how it reached San Fernando was left to this untiring widow from Los Angeles to unravel. She examined the bell at Camulos, photographed it from several angles and set out to learn its history. She reasoned that the bell had either been buried at the mission to protect it against the degradations of secularization, and moved to Camulos by Ygnacio in 1861, or removed to the ranch prior to the 1849 San Fernando inventory.



Cross and inscription on the bell.

She appealed to language experts to ferret out the hidden meaning of the 12-word inscription. Translations were obtained from Dr. Alexis Kall of Los Angeles and the Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff, curator of the territorial museum in Juneau, Alaska. The two translations agreed fundamentally. Taking Father Kashevaroff's painstaking translation as our text, we find: *In the year 1796 in the month of January, this bell was cast on the island of Kodiak with the blessing of Archimandrite Joaseph during the sojourn of Church Warden Elect Alexander Baranoff.* Kashevaroff reasoned that the bell had found its way to Fort Ross, where John Sutter sold it to the good fathers of San Fernando.

Greek Orthodox Church archives revealed that Baranoff had ordered the bell cast in Kodiak from copper obtained from his superior, Shellikoff, using a clapper and tin obtained from the British navigator, George Vancouver. The bell was meant for Terekh Svititeli (Three Saints) Church at the new Russian colony at Sitka. But in 1806 the colony was found in dire straits when Count Nikolai Petrovitch Rezanof of the Russian-American Fur Company and Captain Wolfe visited the port. Count Rezanof bought out the American sea captain, lock, stock and barrel, unloaded his footstuffs and sailed for San Francisco aboard the Juno with the rest of his Boston cargo, and the bell.

At San Francisco he was welcomed by Don Luis Arguello, son of the presidio commandante, Jose Dario Arguello. But without the express permission of the Spanish government, authorities were reluctant to do business with

their Russian visitor. While trying to win them over, the good count found himself royally entertained by the Arguello family's 15 children, including 15-year-old Concepcion. The vivacious girl caught his roving Russian eye from the first. Whether he also saw in her a way to turn a pleasant romantic interlude into a profitable one is a point on which historians disagree. But we do know he was soon able to conclude his business with the Spaniards, load the Juno to the gunwales with much-needed supplies for Sitka and set sail to the north. On May 8, 1806 the distraught Concepcion watched as her romantic Russian suitor sailed off to deliver his supplies and to secure in his homeland the official permission needed for their marriage.

He never returned. Sister Maria Dominica died at the Benicia convent on December 23, 1857 at the age of 66. Concepcion, for it was she, now sleeps beneath a brownstone cross bearing her name.

Meanwhile her father was transferred to the presidio at Santa Barbara, taking the bell with him. When Mission San Fernando asked for a bell to call its Indian neophytes to worship (the mission was under the secular jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara presidio) Arguello had it delivered post haste. The 100-pound bell with its Slavic inscription later cracked, and efforts were made to patch the break with rawhide. Its once-vibrant voice somewhat dimmed by the crack, reminiscent of the crack in America's famed Liberty Bell, it hangs serene and mute in a Camulos garden.

"It is the connecting link when the Christian religion completed the circling of the globe," wrote J. M. Lathrop, who learned of the bell from Father Englehardt at Santa Barbara, "The Greek Russian from the north meets the Spanish from the south."

Historians believe it to be the only authentic Greek Orthodox relic on the North American continent. Church authorities once sought its return; but it has now joined 12 much larger brothers as a permanent Camulos relic of a once grand and haughty California era: once meant to sit proudly on a wall fronting on Highway 126, but now standing like 10 little Indians in a row on the floor of the historic winery.

## PISGAH GRANDE

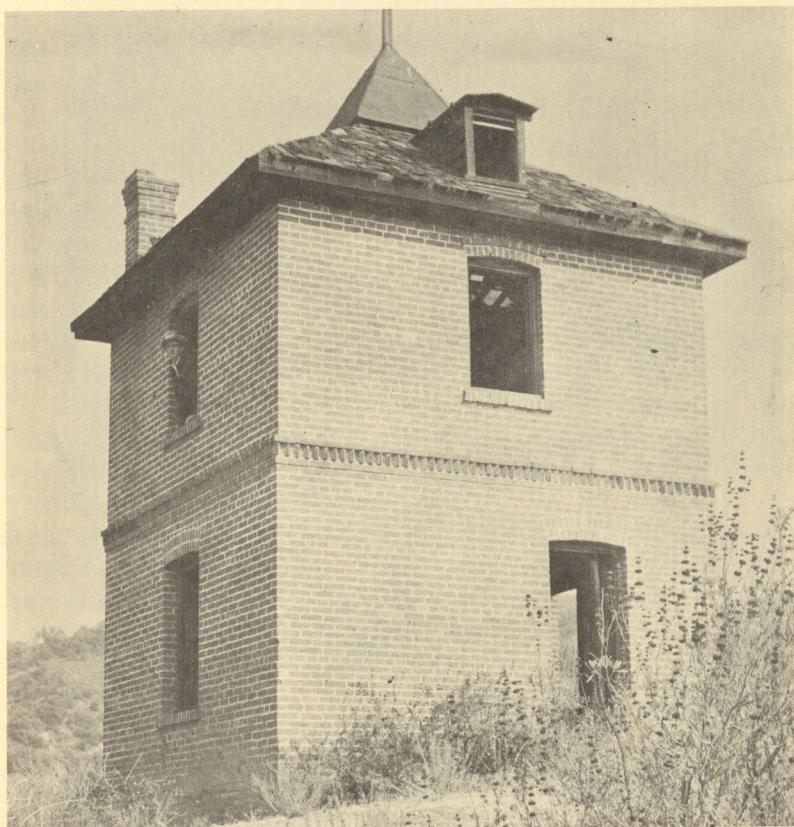
*By BEVERLY LEA*

High in the Las Llajas Canyon, through the green and golds of the sweeping hills, up through an enchanted silence, stands a forgotten and lonely Tower of Prayer. On all four sides the land falls away in purple and green waves in the shadows of the valley, rising up again in bright green and golds to meet the sky. For mile upon endless mile these great waves curve and roll about interrupted occasionally by the sight of a once-loved home, now deserted and crumbling with neglect. The silence is broken only by the sound of the breeze rustling in the distant trees or the ghostly echo of cattle unseen.

As you stand in the Tower of Prayer and feel the soft breeze through the now paneless windows, you gaze down over the roof tops of what remains of Pisgah Grande, a town which once housed 300 lost and homeless souls. They had to leave after the death of their leader, homeless and lost once again.

The story of Pisgah Grande began in 1908 with a team of runaway horses. Dr. Finis E. Yoakum M.D. tried to stop them and was pierced in the chest and lungs by a wagon shaft and given up for dead. He felt that his recovery was miraculous; and later, on a mountain called Mt. Pisgah near Highland Park, he knelt in a prayer of thanks, throwing his pocketbook down, offering himself and all of his worldly goods to the Lord.

He began his service by walking the back streets of Los Angeles asking the discouraged and disillusioned to give themselves to Christ. At first the response was small, but slowly his followers grew. Drunkards, cripples, paupers and habitual criminals heeded and followed the fervent doctor with the white hair and neatly trimmed beard. Not all of his followers were poor however; and as the fame of Dr. Yoakum spread, contributions began to come from all over the world. Many people gave all of their worldly possessions to invest in their soul's salvation with the promise of a home for life in return.



The Tower of Prayer.

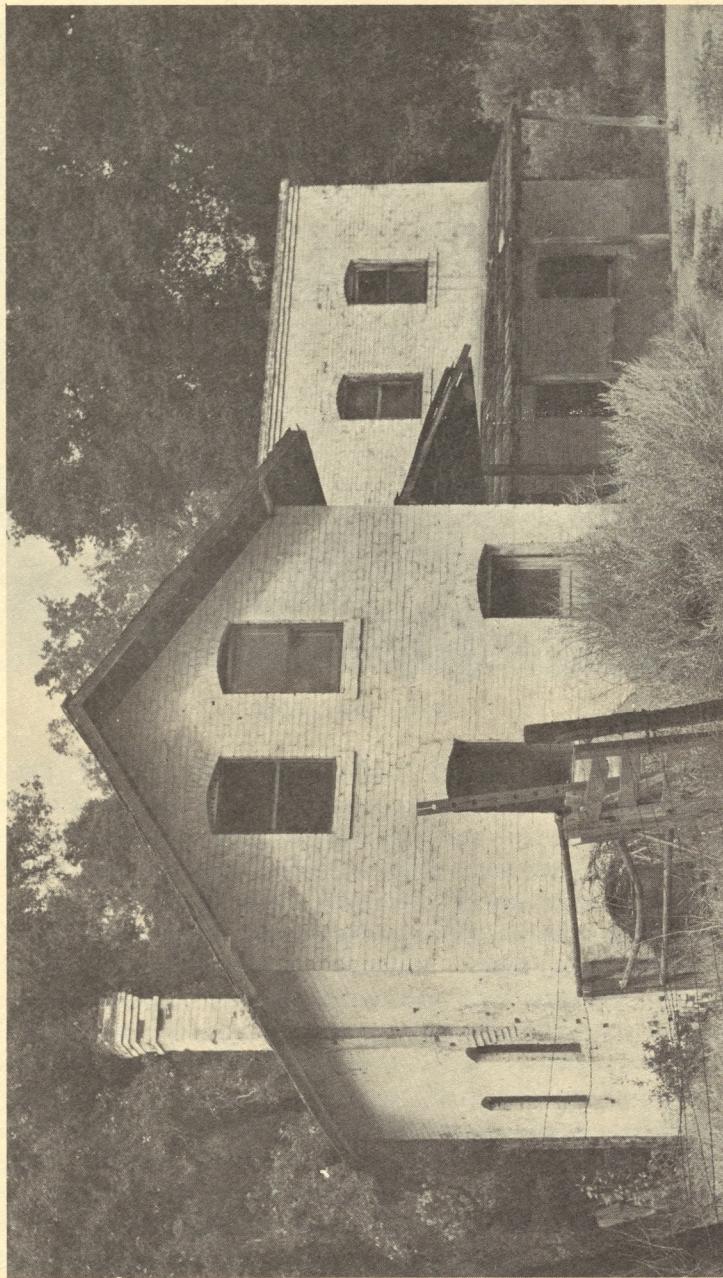
The first Pisgah home was in Highland Park. A tabernacle was built near the home where, after giving up man-made medicine in favor of prayer healing, Dr. Yoakum, along with the Brothers and Sisters (as they were known) prayed for the sick and afflicted. It was claimed that many people left their wheelchairs, crutches, canes and braces behind, a testimony to Dr. Yoakum's prayers. Pisgah represented many things to many people: a place to obtain a free meal to some, homes for the misguided to others; but after fulfilling their first request, regardless of what it was, they all received the same thing in the end: a generous serving

of the gospel, a bath, clean clothes and a job suited to their particular talent.

One small spot could not house all the needs of the outcasts of the city, and Pisgah began to branch out. Under the direction of Dr. Yoakum Pisgah Ark in the Arroyo Seco, a refuge for delinquent girls, was formed. Also in the Arroyo was the Pisgah store for distribution of donated clothes and other goods, and Pisgah Gardens in the San Fernando Valley where mental cases, tuberculosis and cancer patients were treated. Out of love for their leader and his wife, Dr. Yoakum's followers built a mansion near the home and donated it to the doctor. Soon it too was overrun with Pisgah work, and Dr. Yoakum and his wife moved into a tent pitched on the grounds of the home.

By 1914 the Pisgah empire had outgrown its original location and the doctor began his search for a place far from the city where his people could have their own community, grow their own crops and live in peace away from the eyes of the curious. He discovered it in the Santa Susana mountains, where he purchased 3200 acres on the Los Angeles-Ventura county line for approximately \$50,000. Dr. Yoakum was heard to remark that his new location was truly another Garden of Eden for here was everything his people needed: continually running springs supplying all of their water; acres of ground for the planting of melons, olives, and orchards of fruit. Building stone was cut from sandstone formations on the property; clay for bricks was dug from a hillside near the center of the settlement; a row of limekilns in one of the canyons provided lime for mortar. Soon everyone was hard at work. Those who had no special skills prayed for guidance and became skilled carpenters and bricklayers. Brick homes went up, each with its own fireplace to provide heat in the winter. A school house, post office, dining hall and mission headquarters were also built. The road through Chatsworth was considered too dangerous for general use, so the Brothers built a new one down Las Llajas Canyon into the Simi Valley. The springs, dug out and tiled, became gushing artesian fountains feeding an engineered system of irrigation ditches.

There were farmers, teachers, nurses and artists of all



The Mission headquarters.



A two-story home.

types and all of them put their talents to work. People from the valley came out of curiosity at first. Later they came to join in the social get-togethers. They came to depend on the doctor to furnish extra help when needed, and the ranchers found that many of the residents of Pisgah were invaluable during certain seasons of the year when additional help was needed. Soon they were accepted, and many Simi residents were invited to special occasions at the Grande. It was said that Dr. Yoakum gave an estimated 350,000 free meals a year. Only requirement for this meal was the right to hold a mass prayer service for the partaker. Those not familiar with the colony were heard to comment that they were not so sure the meal was worth it under these circumstances (especially due to the fact that the community was strictly vegetarian). The doctor, who never laughed at his critics but instead only prayed for them, continued to



The post office.

prosper. He maintained that the Lord would provide for him and his followers as long as he lived and continued to live his life in the service of God.

With his death in 1920, this statement seemed all the more true for despite the efforts of James Cheek, manager of the Grande, and others, the people who had worked so hard began to see the movement fall apart before their eyes. The work which had continued in Los Angeles scattered. The headquarters were subsequently moved to a ranch in the San Bernardino Mountains, then to Pikeville, Tenn. where Pisgah still survives. The old home on Echo St. became Echo Home, a property of the Christ Faith Mission Corp. James Cheek became editor and publisher of the *Herald of hope*, an evangelistic paper with a circulation of about 100,000 copies supported entirely by unsolicited gifts.

Pisgah Grande and its control went to Dr. Yoakum's



A one-story home.

two sons, Finis and Charles, and what happened after this is debatable. Some say that the brothers asked all the inhabitants to leave the only homes they ever knew and then locked the gates behind them. It was reported that after they thought all the people had gone, two of the Sisters walked up the canyon, moved back into their home and lived there for several years. Then they too disappeared, the story goes.

The hills of Pisgah Grande which once rang with songs of prayers and hymns, where bright red geraniums neatly boarded the paths and children skipped merrily to the little red schoolhouse under the oak trees, now only ring with ghostly echos of those songs; the geraniums are overshadowed by weeds and the school house has been torn down for use of the valuable bricks with which it was built. Cecil Miller of Oxnard now owns the property. The mission is used as a harness room; the kitchen, a blacksmith shop; the fields for the grazing of Miller's cattle; and his horses roam in and out of the valley at will. Miller does not live on the ranch but directs it from his home in Oxnard.

Ghostly stories have been connected with the Grande as with all deserted places; stories of mysterious lights "floating in space" and sounds not connected with anything visible. "I never say anything," said Miller, "You know, after a while folks get to remembering a whole lot of things that never happened. Then there's always a few things do happen that they'd just as soon forget." But despite the fact that he laughs off the question, no one sleeps in the beds that still remain in the crumbled homes, no one except one bedraggled and jumpy cat.

## *Membership*

LIFE  
Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Isabelle M. Reynolds

SUSTAINING  
Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teagu  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Successor to John J. MacGregor. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.





VENTURA  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

August 1964

## *The Ventura County Historical Society*

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Pioneer Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. There are three classes of membership—active, \$5 per year, sustaining, \$25 per year and life, \$100.

The QUARTERLY is published in February, May, August and November from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the staff includes Mrs. D. A. Cameron, F. L. Fairbanks, J. H. Morrison and R. G. Percy.

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. All communications should be addressed to the Society at the Pioneer Museum. Memberships include subscription to the QUARTERLY. Additional copies are available at \$1.00 each.

Five hundred seventy-five copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by the Pacific Coast Publishing Company, Ventura, California.

# The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly

Vol. IX, No. 4

August, 1964

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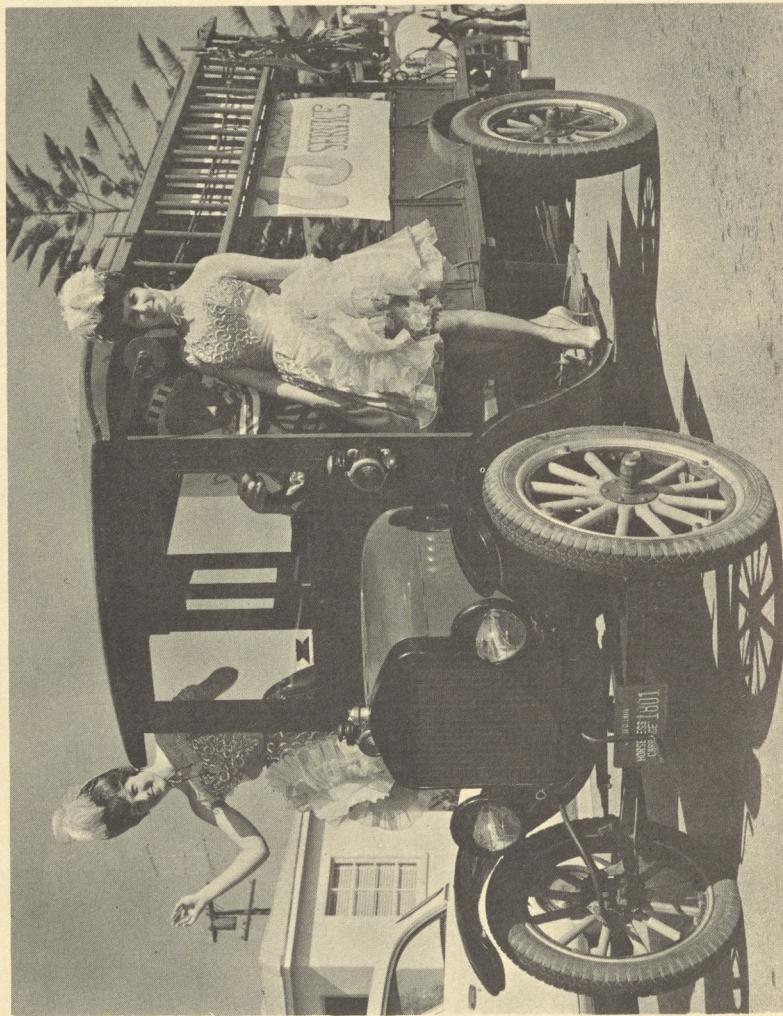
VENTURAS ANNEX COUNTY CROWN IN 1880

BASEBALL OF YESTERYEARS

## *Notice*

The Fourth of July parade recalls one of four decades ago in the article on the telephone company. Its author, Gary Simpson, had personal interviews with long-time telephone employees as well as access to his company's records.

How old is baseball in Ventura County? In addition to the three articles, there are other recollections. Richard B. (Dick) Haydock, one of the best-loved teachers in Ventura County, had graduated from the Los Angeles Normal on December 17, 1885. He was elected as principal and sole teacher in Hueneme School about 1886, a one-room building on Broad Street. F. L. Fairbanks was one of his students in the period 1886-91. There was no room to play ball on Broad Street, but on the ground adjoining the new building there was plenty of room; and Dick Haydock trained the boys to pitch, catch and bat. It was great help, for at that time he was considered the best pitcher in southern California and was said to have been its first curve pitcher. Out around the long-gone village of Springville lived hard-fisted ranchers who liked to play ball; and with Dick Haydock to pitch for them, they were almost invariably too much for any ball team Los Angeles could produce.



In the 1964  
Fourth of July  
Parade, Pacific  
Telephone's float  
made use of a 1921  
line truck driven  
by Repair Foreman  
R. W. Boatner which  
carried Telephone  
Princesses Kathy  
Warnke and Janice  
Ludwick.

## THE TELEPHONE COMES TO VENTURA

By GARY SIMPSON

Alexander Graham Bell's revolutionary new "electric-speaking telephone" was so enthusiastically received by Californians that San Francisco became the third city in the world to open a telephone exchange on February 17, 1878, just two years after the invention's first successful use. In 1880 the National Bell Company, owners of the original Bell patents and forerunner of the present nationwide Bell System, organized the Pacific Bell Telephone Company with exclusive license to provide service in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona and a portion of Utah. The following years saw several small companies formed, each privately owned serving separate cities and licensed by Bell headquarters in San Francisco. There had been no attempt to join these scattered systems together by voice since the telegraph had answered the public need fairly well to that time.

By 1883 this was no longer the case, and the Sunset Telephone-Telegraph Company was formed expressly for the purpose of constructing and operating long distance lines to link these distant communities. This new firm absorbed all the smaller companies and, in order to raise funds, issued script coupons with which the purchasers could pay toll bills. It was this company which established the first exchange in Ventura under Franchise Ordinance No. 39 dated January 7, 1889. In April of that same year, the Sunset Telephone *and* Telegraph Company was incorporated with a capital stock of \$3 million for the purpose of acquiring the property of the original Sunset company. It did so by issuing the "old" Sunset organization 29,993 shares of its new stock. Later in the year the first Sunset company was dissolved, and its Sunset Telephone and Telegraph stock was distributed to the shareholders. Since the Pacific Bell Company was the majority stockholder, they thereby also acquired controlling interest in the new Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company.

By 1890 the telephone network in Ventura had ex-

I WYNNE, DAN.....Boat House.

## VALLEJO JUNCTION.

PUBLIC TELEPHONE—P. CLAUDIUS, Agent.

## VENTURA.

ELLA SIFFORD - - - - Manager.

12	ANACAPA HOTEL	F. Hartman, Prop.
37	AYERS & ROBINSON	Los Angeles Stables.
17	BAKER, F. W.	Hardware.
51	BANK OF VENTURA	
11	BARD, C. L.	Physician.
71	BARNES, W. H.	Residence.
31	BARNES & SELBY.	Attorneys.
61	BARTLETT BROS.	Jewelry, Stationery and Music.
39	BEEKMAN, W. M.	Kennedy Stables.
46	BLACKSTOCK & EWING	Lawyers.
75	BRIGGS, A. D.	City Market.
63	CAMARILLO, JUAN E.	Residence.
18	CASTLE SALOON	A. M. Carrillo.
21	CHAFFEE MERCANTILE CO.	General Merchandise.
68	CHARLEBOIS, P.	Residence.
13	CHARLEBOIS, P. & CO.	Hardware.
59	CERF, L.	Saloon.
32	COLLINS, J. S.	Residence.
22	COLLINS & SONS	Bankers.
8	COMSTOCK, A. J.	Physician.
24	CONNER & BLACKSTOCK	Grocers.
6	COURT HOUSE	
28	CROTHERS, J. D.	Rose Hotel Stables.
45	DAY, J. A. & CO.	Grocers.
80	DEMOCRAT	Jno. McGonigle, Pub.
58	DISTRICT ATTORNEY	Ventura County.
76	DUDLEY, B. W.	Residence.
40	"FREE PRESS"	B. A. Sykes, Publisher.
23	GRANGER, W. H.	Grocer.
35	HARE, ED. T.	Residence.
60	HOBSON BROS.	Ventura Live Stock and Slaughtering Co.
2	HOBSON BROS.	Ventura Live Stock and Slaughtering Co.
33	HOSPITAL	Druggists.
70	JONES & SON	O. R. Logue, Prop'r.
14	LOGUE STABLES	Physician—Residence.
7	LOVE, DR. J. H.	Grocers.
34	McGONIGLE & HEARNE	Grocer.
41	MICKEL, GEO. N.	Magnolia Saloon.
19	MIDDLESWARTH, J. M.	City Drug Store.
65	NEWBY & MILLER	Pioneer Drug Store.
1	OREÑA, A.	Attorney-at-Law.
42	ORR, ORESTES.	
50	PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE	
66	PEOPLE'S LUMBER CO.	Residence.
4	PRATT, A.	Undertakers.
36	REILLY BROS.	Undertakers.
44	RICHARDSON, J. & SON	Residence.
73	RODRIGUEZ, J. Y.	Frank J. Crank, Proprietor.
43	ROSE HOTEL	Orton & Son.
10	ROSE MILLS	

49	RUIZ, A.	Saloon.
15	SAN BUENA VENTURA WHARF CO.	
5	SANTA CLARA HOTEL.	E. M. Jones, Prop'r.
71 <sup>3</sup>	SELBY, LLOYD	Residence.
54 <sup>3</sup>	SEXTON, MRS. HATTIE E.	Residence.
3	SHEPHERD & EASTIN.	Attorneys and Searchers of Records.
67	SHERIFF'S OFFICE	Court House.
20	SIFFORD, F. J.	Pacific Transfer Co.
10 <sup>3</sup>	SMITH, N. B.	Residence.
16	SOUTHERN PACIFIC MILLING CO.	
26	SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY CO.	Depot.
40 <sup>3</sup>	SYKES, B. A.	Residence.
55	TODD, THEO.	Residence.
52	TOLAND, THOS. O.	Attorney-at-Law.
9	TRYCE, FRANK.	Constable.
38	VENTURA COUNTY FRUIT CO.	
25	VENTURA COUNTY LUMBER CO.	Office and Yard.
57	VENTURA COUNTY LUMBER CO.	Planing Mill.
53	VENTURA LAND AND POWER CO.	Ice Plant.
48	VENTURIAN, THE.	Mason & Moffett, Proprs.
47	WAGNER, E. M.	Residence.

VERNONDALE. PUBLIC TELEPHONE—MOORE & DRAPER, Agents.

VINA. PUBLIC TELEPHONE—P. PYERITZ, Agent.

STANFORD, MRS. J. L.	Ranch.
TONG YOU	Merchant.



APRIL, 1895.

# TELEPHONE — DIRECTORY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

panded to a total of 40 subscribers. John I. Sabin and Louis Glass, organizers of the new Sunset Telephone company, married two Ventura sisters whose family name was Perkins. These two early-day telephone executives went on to become President and Vice-President respectively of the Pacific Company. During the early 1890's the telephone exchange was located in the Bank of Ventura building at the corner of Oak and Main Streets. It was managed by Ella Sifford who also directed a trolley line from the same location. The two operations were quite complementary, however, "since a caller had to crank the phone and ask Ella to reach their party to complete the call anyway", according to Fergus L. Fairbanks who served as a part-time operator while a sophomore in high school, "Ella knew everyone who had a telephone and where they were most of the time anyway; through her trolley activities she usually knew whether they were available or out of town." Working to earn pocket money, Fairbanks was Ventura's operator from 7 to 8 in the morning and from 6 until 10 at night. He received \$10 a month for working six days a week and every other Sunday. "There wasn't really much to do," said Fairbanks, "What customers there were usually headed for the beach when the sun came out. At 10 P.M. I locked the doors for the day." One very personal type of emergency was always allowed however: expectant mothers had their telephones connected directly to Dr. Cephas Bard's in case the blessed event would not wait until the office opened the next morning.

The year 1894 saw the first telephone conversation between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The simple equipment of that day only vaguely resembles today's modern telephone traffic office. A flap on the switchboard dropped above the proper plug if it were a local call; long distance calls had bells. The 78 subscribers in 1895 had the crank-type magneto set powered by heavy batteries located in each home. Users were constantly cautioned to "always return the instrument to its proper place after use, otherwise your battery will be speedily exhausted so that you cannot talk through your transmitter." Even so the telephone business was rapidly expanding in Ventura as well

as California. A directory dated March, 1899 proclaimed: Wire a man by telegraph and he can avoid or *delay reply*—Catch him on the telephone and you force an *immediate answer*! The directory served the Pacific States Long Distance Telephone Companies which included subscribers in California, Oregon and Washington. Telephone users in Ventura, now 120 strong, were provided many useful bits of information by the volume:

*How to Answer a Telephone Call*—Remove the hand telephone from the hook and say: "Here is Main 297" (or whatever your number may be). The party calling should say: "This is Main 298" (or whatever the number may be). Much friction and annoyance will be avoided if this simple plan is carried out.

Since the price of any item or service is traditionally of prime importance in American business, the directory offered: *Of Course You* have always had a telephone at your home, but perhaps your relatives or friends have none. Why not tell them about the comfort and convenience derived from same and advise them to get a residence long distance telephone. "5 Cents per Day—Perfect Service—10 Party Line."

The expiration of the first Bell patent in 1893 made it possible for anyone to manufacture telephone equipment or sell telephone service. The next few years saw many independent companies come into being, sometimes in direct competition with Bell exchanges. Among these was the Ventura Home Telephone and Telegraph Company which began operating in June, 1903 under Ordinance No. 124 in a franchise granted to Arthur Wright. About the same time Fred Smith was serving as a night operator in Ojai. Smith reports he lost his evening job soon after taking "unguided steps" to halt the practice of some customers who were using the telephone company as their private alarm clock. On January 2, 1907 The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, successor to the original Pacific Bell Company, began to operate the properties of Sunset Telephone and Telegraph. Pacific Telephone and the Ventura Home company operated in direct competition until October 1, 1918. At that time Pacific bought their independent competitor with the approval of the California Rail-



Horse drawn rig of pre-World War I.

road Commission, which was then the regulatory body for public utilities.

In 1910 a major improvement was made in local telephone service with the changeover from magneto-powered sets to a common-battery system. Crews of installer-repairmen began to convert the bulky battery sets in the 490 Ventura homes served by telephone. Power was now supplied by much larger batteries in a centrally located telephone office. It was the beginning of the end for the old familiar crank phone. Although horse-drawn rigs were quickly falling out of style, Pacific Telephone maintained a standing reservation for a good strong team at the James Mack Livery Stable at the corner of Oak and Santa Clara Streets to service outlying subscribers and equipment. Pacific's telephone office was at this time located at 38 S. Oak Street immediately adjacent to Gibson's Funeral Parlor. Telephone crews occasionally took time to assist Mr. Gibson with some of his huskier clientel.

In 1915 the first New York to San Francisco telephone call was made, and transcontinental service was established in ceremonies which featured tones of the Liberty Bell traveling over the line from Philadelphia to be heard in



Telephone employees in front of Oak Street office, 1918.

San Francisco. Even at this time Pacific Telephone and Telegraph provided its own long distance service, while the Ventura Home company was equipped to offer local service only. The latter firm looked to yet another independent company, the United States Long Distance Service, for long distance connections. Louis Sanchez was the Ventura chief operator for U.S. Long Distance which operated from a building just across the alley from Pacific Telephone's Oak Street location. Until U.S. Long Distance moved into Pacific Telephone's building with the acquisition of Ventura Home Telephone in 1918, Ventura callers had to tell the operator which of the two toll services they wished to have complete their call.

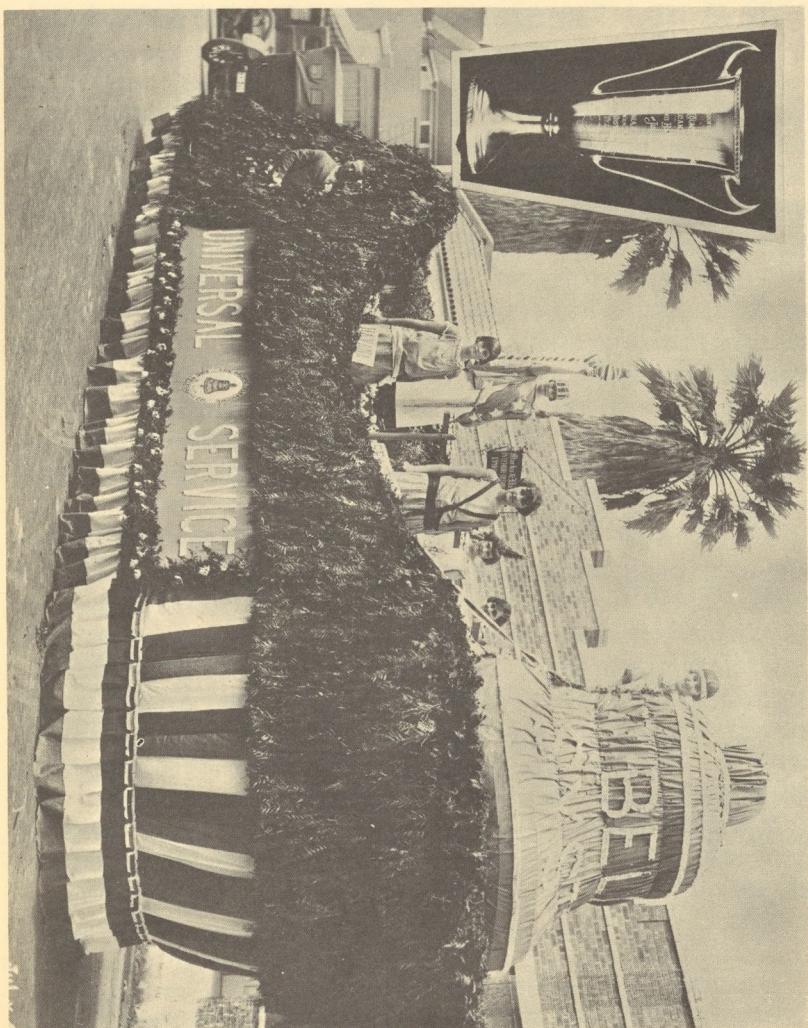
With the arrival of the Twenties the number of telephones had increased to 950. On August 4, 1922 telephones in Ventura and throughout the United States and Canada were silent for one minute, just before sunset, marking the funeral of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Since its inception the telephone has established itself as a symbol of relief in time of emergency. Again and again telephone men and women have been called upon to safeguard the well-being, both physical and mental, of a community. Ventura County



Motorized equipment of post-World War I.

history has recorded its share of such incidents. Foreman Steve Wilkes vividly recalls losing all his tools and equipment when a recurring shock caught him at the top of a pole desperately trying to restore communications during the 1925 earthquake that demolished much of Santa Barbara. Lineman Ray White, Allen Ambaugh and Steve O'Connell were caught and marooned for hours on the Montalvo Bridge while trying to protect lines during the San Francisquito flood in 1928. The key role telephone men and women played in the rescue and restoration work during and after this catastrophe earned a special citation from Governor Herron. The years have seen many miles of wire laid to keep forestry crews supplied with communications as they battle fires which periodically rage through the area.

Ventura enjoyed another major improvement in telephone service in 1928 with the introduction of machine switching. This brought the introduction of dial telephones and the old familiar phrase "Number Please?" was destined for oblivion. With the streamlined service brought about by this improvement Ventura's telephones had quadrupled by 1930 totaling 3,883.



Designed and constructed under the supervision of Wire Chief Al Bixler, this float won First Prize in the industrial division of the 1924 Fourth of July Parade.

Mrs. Mable Rainey

portrayed the Statue of Liberty, while the four girls in the center

(Winifred Wilkes, Gladys and Goldie Lloyd and Helen Hernandez) symbolized cities

of the four

corners of the U.S.A. receiving Bell System service. The Telephone Queen in the bell is Lillian Kingston. Driving the ingenious creation from the far end is Steve Wilkes.

In April, 1930 the company merged all of its southern California properties which were then being operated by six different companies including the United States Long Distance Telephone and Telegraph Company. The transfer of properties was completed on June 1st; and thereafter service was provided by one company, known as the Southern California Telephone Company. As might be imagined, this reorganization resulted in considerably greater efficiency in both operating and administrative methods throughout the territory. Telephone growth continued to climb through the depression years and by 1940 totaled 6,300 stations. On April 1, 1947 Southern California Telephone was merged with the parent company and became The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company's Southern California area. By 1950 the number of telephones in Ventura had swelled to 10,500.

On August 11, 1963 23,000 Ventura area subscribers were to experience yet another far-reaching innovation in service. Early that morning a switch that literally cost the company \$1 million was thrown and from that moment local telephoners were connected directly to 37½ million telephones throughout the United States and Canada through the electro-mechanical marvel known as Direct Distance Dialing. Today Pacific Telephone serves more than 40,000 subscribers throughout Ventura County; and our brief backward glance over the past 75 years seems to have been only a beginning for both Ventura and Pacific Telephone.

## BASEBALL HERE IN THE OLD DAYS

By E. M. SHERIDAN

In recalling baseball of early Ventura, the first club was organized in this place in October, 1873. That first baseball team, of which the writer states with pride he was the first captain, began its playing when baseball was still played bare-handed and the pitcher really pitched the ball and did not throw it. The catcher took the ball on the first bound and not right off the bat. In the game the club that made the most tallies won, and this was the feature. It is still that, of course, but there are other details in baseball now that little was thought of in the olden days.

Of the organization of that first team, the *Ventura Signal* of October 18, 1873 has the following account:

We are glad to note the fact that the lovers of the manly game in our town have organized a baseball club, with the following officers—

President George F. Adams (Adams was a printer on the *Signal*).

Secretary Chas. Barnett (Barnett was a cousin of the late Jack Barnett).

Treasurer J. J. Sheridan (A partner of W. E. Shepherd in the ownership of the *Signal*).

Directors Willis Leach (brother of Bruce Leach) Milan Colegrove, Ed Ayers, Ed Sheridan and Geo. Adams.

Ed Sheridan has been selected as captain of the first nine. (The club constituted the first nine. It was contemplated getting up a second nine with which to play games, there being no other nine possible in the county at that early period.)

They held a meeting this evening at the schoolhouse (the old Hill school) to further perfect their organization, when those interested in advancing the enterprise are invited to be present and become members. Several of the members have had some experience and all of them have mettle to make good players. We hope soon to see a display of their skill.

The *Signal* of November 22, 1873 tells of the first game the first nine played against the "picked nine":

At 2 o'clock this afternoon the Ventura Baseball Club play their first match game against a picked nine of citizens. The game comes off on the grounds of the club near the foot of Palm Street; and as the parties are in good trim, we expect to see some fine playing.

The *Signal* of November 29, 1873 tells of the game:

Last Saturday afternoon a friendly challenge passed between the first nine of the Ventura B. B. C. and a picked nine of citizens. Following is the score—

	Outs	Runs						
Sheridan, Ed, c	2	9						
Kelley, p	3	7						
Sheridan, J., ss	1	8						
Colegrove, 1b	2	7						
Albertson, 2b	4	5						
Adams, 3b	3	6						
Perkins, 1f	3	7						
Ayers, J., cf	3	7						
PICKED NINE								
Easley, c	3	1						
Buckman, p	1	1						
Penry, ss	5	0						
Streeter, 1b	0	4						
De Nure, 2b	2	2						
Harmon, 3b	0	4						
Gonzales, If	3	2						
Ayers, Albert, cf	3	2						
Arrellanes, rf	4	1						
INNINGS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Ventura	7	3	15	1	4	20	6	56
Picked 9	0	2	5	3	4	1	2	17
Scorer	Mrs. C. H. Bailey							
Umpire	Frank Albertson							

That was the first game, but there have been many since, in Ventura County. It was not many months after that game before Ventura received a challenge from a team at Springville, went out there full of confidence and came back much cast down. The team there beat the cocky Ventura boys unmercifully, and only darkness prevented a worse defeat.

The county has sent out in the persons of Charley Hall and Fred Snodgrass some real big league material, both these players doing wonderful work in their baseball years. Snodgrass was with the New York Giants for 10 years, while Hall, in his more than 20 years was in both big leagues and in the National League twice. There have been other players from the county who have made records, among them being Harvey Walbridge, Jack Barnett, Edmund Hearne and others.

## VENTURAS ANNEX COUNTY CROWN IN 1880

*from the VENTURA Signal*

The third and final game for the championship of the county between the Venturas of this place and the St. Julians of Santa Paula transpired on the 31st at the Sand Lots here, and was won by the former club by a score of 32 to 13. As will be remembered, about three months ago Bartlett Brothers offered a prize bat and ball for the champion club of the county to be won in a series of games with every contesting club, and a silver goblet for the best individual score made during the series. The Venturas and Silver Stars of this place and the St. Julians of Santa Paula entered as competitors, the inaugural game being played on last Thanksgiving Day between our home clubs, the Venturas winning after a close game by a score of 27 to 23. The next game was taken quite easily by the Silver Stars by a score of 34 to 16. The final match was won by the Venturas after a severe struggle by a score of 31 to 25.

Immediately after the results the Venturas challenged the St. Julians and defeated them on their grounds at this place by a score of 28 to 19. The next game was played at Santa Paula and was won by the St. Julians by a score of 35 to 34. The results of last Saturday's game proclaim the Venturas as the champions of the county. Previous to the match, bets of ten to one were freely offered on the Venturas with but few takers, the result of the game being a foregone conclusion. The game was called promptly at 2, the St. Julians being sent to the bat. They succeeded in getting three of their number safely at the home-plate ere they relinquished the reins of government to their opponents, and the latter attempted the ordeal of striking Taylor's elusive delivery.

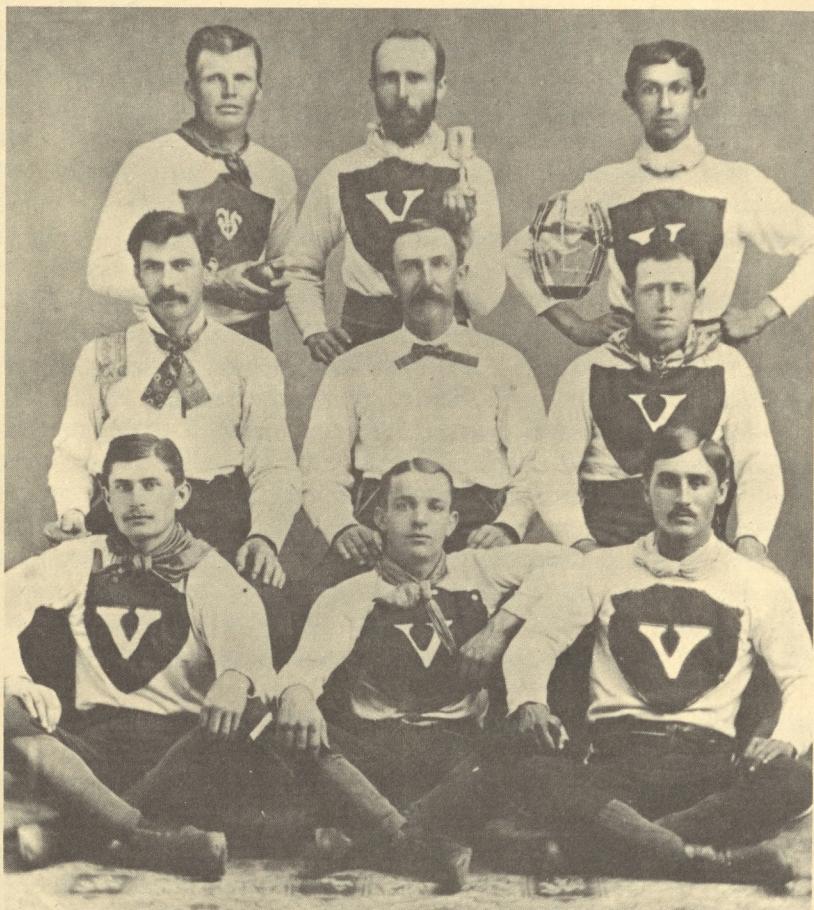
It was at this stage of the game that the one sad mishap, which cast a gloom over all, occurred to mar the serenity of enjoyment. Billy Buttner had started to run from the second to third base, when Barbour, who was guarding that position, endeavored to put him out. One of the prerequisites necessary to form a good baseball player

is his ability to throw himself upon his back and propel himself a couple of rods in this graceful manner without being touched by the baseman. Buttner possessed this superior quality, indeed it is his customary attitude; and the result was Barbour, who is not acquainted with the wiles of the former, inserted his leg in the way of the mass of humanity rolling a beer-barrel; and immediately there was a sharp cry of pain, a scared look on the faces of those near, and Buttner arose and called out "My leg is broken, send for a doctor". An investigation soon revealed the fact that he had indeed suffered a fracture of both bones of his left leg just above the ankle, the latter being thrown out of joint. Every care was shown him and he was immediately taken to Dr. Bard's office, where the broken bones were set and the dislocated joint replaced to its natural position. During this performance he never uttered a sound of complaint or groan, and refused to allow chloroform; the fortitude displayed under such trying circumstances being something that would lead one back to the days of the Spartan heroes. At last account he was doing well.

Carnes of the Silver Stars was substituted and the game was proceeded with. Heasley, Buttner and McLean each earned a run; Wagner, Chas. Murray and McElroy being put out. On the second Hinton, Carnes and Butcher reached the blessed goal; A. Sheppard, Skinner and Russell succumbing to the dexterity of their opponents. Baker and S. Murray were the only ones of the Venturas fortunate to tally in the second inning; Heasley, Wagner and C. Murray being put out in rapid succession. The third and fourth innings resulted in a pair of goose-eggs being dealt out to the club with the compound appellation so suggestive of saintly meekness, while our town club ran eight men in. From then on the game was decidedly one-sided, the Venturas handling the ball with the skill of professionals while their opponents, though seemingly making few errors, were unable to make any showing; and it was a luxury if anyone of them saw first base. Three of them will go home and say they know not the color thereof. The score was 32 to 13.

The line-up for the Venturas was: Heasley, 3b; Wag-

ner, ss; C. Murray, lf; Buttner, cf; McLean, rf; McElroy, c; Baker, p. St. Julians: Hinton, c; E. Sheppard, lf; Bennett, 1b; Russell, ss; Skinner, 2b; Taylor, p; Carnes, 3b; A. Sheppard, cf; Butcher, rf. Umpire: I. H. Harloe.



Such players as Robert Elwell and Harvey Walbridge from this Ventura Baseball Club of 1885 contributed to the picked Ventura County team.

## BASEBALL OF YESTERYEARS

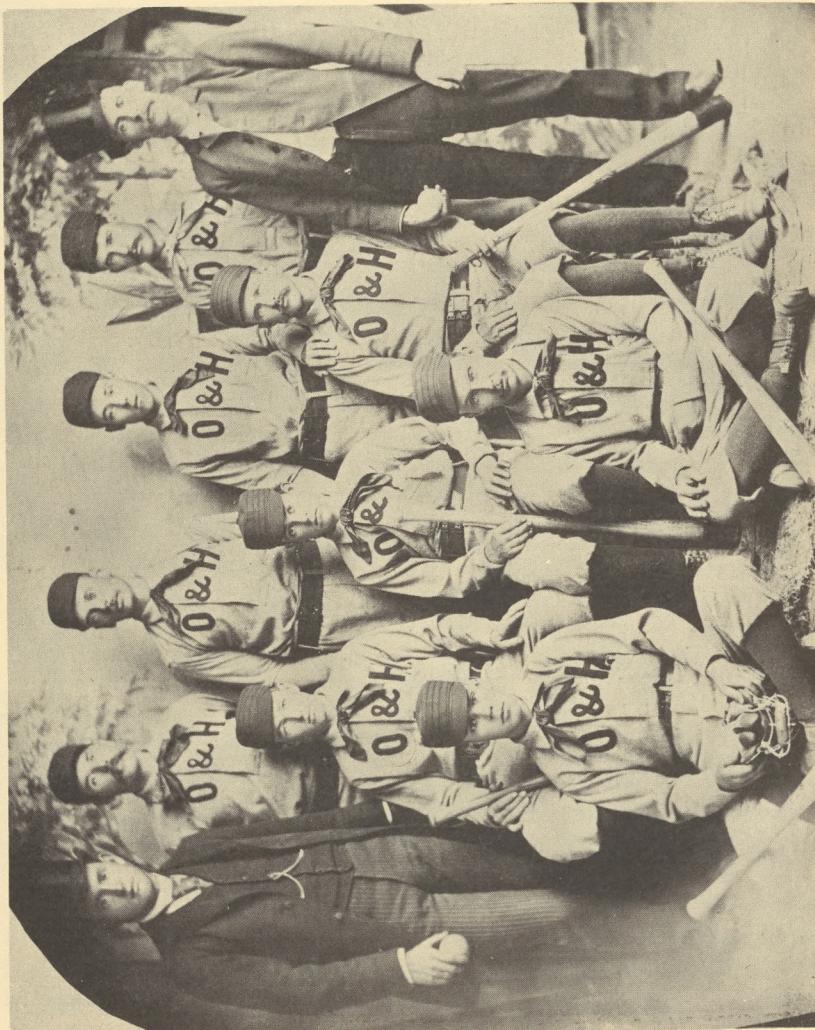
*By ROBERT M. CLARKE*

When I was a boy of approximately five years of age, on a certain Fourth of July I witnessed a baseball game between a picked Ventura County team and the championship team of Los Angeles County. The game was played at Santa Paula on what might have been termed the village common, lying south of what is now the Southern Pacific Railway tracks east of Tenth Street and north of Telegraph Road or Main Street. I viewed it from the side lines and was tutored in baseball as then played by Dr. Guiberson and Sam Todd. With a becoming local pride I was very much interested in the home team. The line-up was approximately as follows:

Catchers: Carl Barkla and Robert Elwell  
Pitcher: Harvey Walbridge  
First Baseman: Paul Frost  
Second Baseman: Fred Corey  
Short Stop: Wilmer Akers  
Third Baseman: John Sebastian  
Left Field: Robert Green  
Center Field: John Cawelti  
Right Field: John Fox

If there are any old-timers who remember the facts better, they should correct the line-up.

In those days the batter had the right to call for either a high or low ball, and the pitcher was required to comply with his request. Fouls were fouls, and the batter could take as many as he pleased. Harvey Walbridge was a great pitcher, a left-hander, and, as I remember it, somewhat of a whirlwind, so much so that the batters thought him ambidextrous. He later engaged in professional baseball in other parts of California. Carl Barkla, who was one of those catchers who caught bare-handed sans mask or protector, and, as we used to say, "took 'em right off the bat," was, I believe, injured, and the major portion, if not all of the game, was caught by Robert Elwell of Ventura. The picked nine of Ventura County was successful on that historic occasion.



O & H  
BASEBALL  
TEAM

E. G. Ord  
Harvey Gallagher  
Bob Green  
Ike Browne  
Dallas Gallagher  
Chas. Haselton

Arthur Granger  
William Fleisher  
Wilmer Akers

Wm. Nisbit  
William Granger

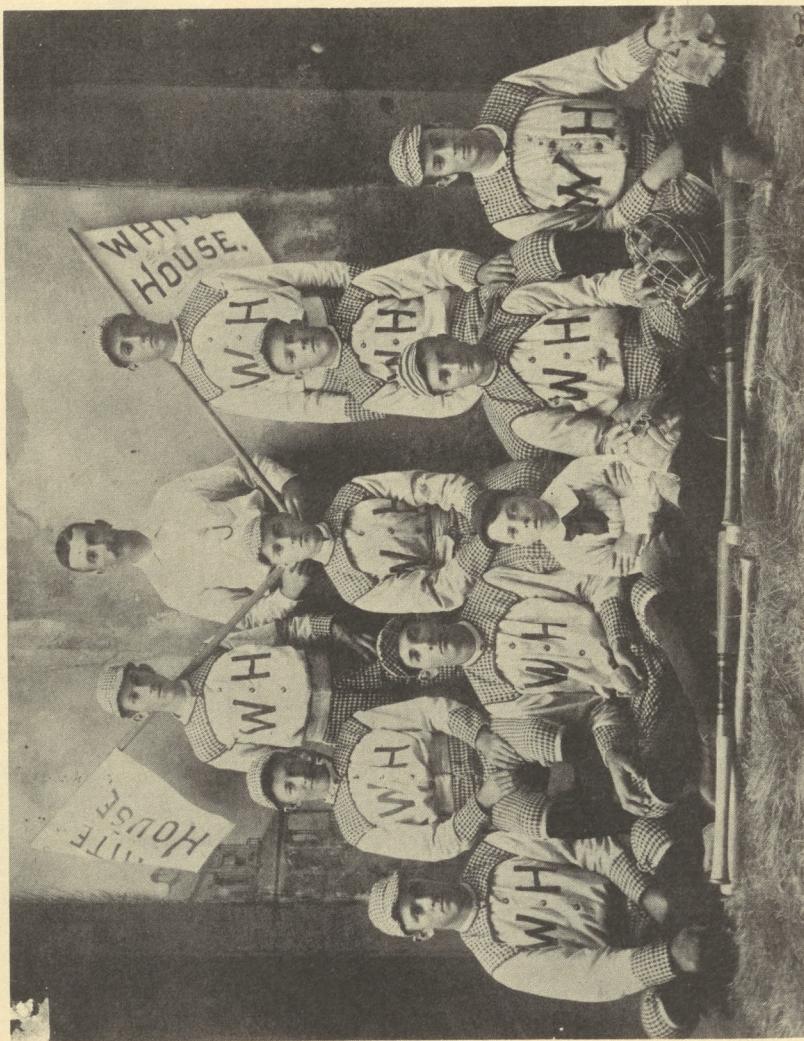
Ord and Haselton  
gave the suits in 1887  
to advertise their  
hardware business.

The various localities of Ventura County developed exceptionally good baseball teams. The Santa Paula team was built around the names of those hereinabove mentioned who are familiar to old-timers. The Springville team consisted largely of Sebastians and Cawelties. Ventura developed a great twirler, R. B. "Dick" Haydock. The Santa Ana team, which included the Ojai, had as players the Fox brothers and the Mendibles boys.

Baseball was played intermittently in and around Santa Paula and had a great revival in the early 'nineties when Emmett Ord and Charles Haselton organized the famous "O. and H." Baseball Team. A picture of this baseball team was recently printed in the Chronicle. Due to my interest in the game I was commissioned to act as "mascot" or "bat boy" for the team on some occasions.

Between the first early-day team and the later there was much discussion along Main Street as to whether or not it was possible to throw a curved ball, but a certain oil tool worker by the name of Darby finally convinced the "doubting Thomases" that a curved ball could be either an "in" or "out." Darby caught for and coached the "O. and H." team, replacing a catcher named Nesbit. Ike Browne developed into a superb pitcher. The infield consisted of Harvey Gallagher, first base; Dallas Gallagher, second base; Wilmer Akers, short stop; Will Fleisher, third base; Arthur Grainger, left field; Robert Green, center field; Thomas Grainger, right field. Milton Fleisher, now a prosperous lemon-grower, served as catcher and utility player. The ancient and honorable opponents of this team were the so-called "White House Team" promoted by W. R. Stone, who founded the White House Dry Goods Store in Ventura, later owned by Thomas J. Donavon. With occasional exceptions the general line-up of this team was: Henry Sparks, catcher; J. Mungari; pitcher; with an "in" and "out" field consisting of Walter and George Johnson, Charles Capito, John and Ed Newby, Paul E. Haugh, and others whose names I do not now recall. The trains ran then, and the summer season was interspersed with games played both at Ventura and Santa Paula.

After the establishment of the High School system



WHITE HOUSE  
BASEBALL CLUB  
1889

E. Reitzke  
A. L. Strickland  
J. Spear

W. E. Johnson  
P. Haugh  
E. Newby

J. Newby  
C. Mungari  
J. Mitchell  
B. Wurch  
C. Capito

in Ventura County, baseball for a long period of time was the chief athletic sport. In my time there was a team at Ventura High School and likewise out at the Thacher School in Ojai. A great many enthusiasts and some very splendid baseball players were developed between 1890 and 1900, when, by reason of my interest in other subjects, I did not take a particular interest in the young men who were coming along. The players for the Santa Paula Union High School of that period were, among others.

Catchers:	Ben C. Haugh Clayton Rich Charles Gowan	Infielders:	Ony M. Nicely Thomas C. Olmstead and your humble scribe
Pitchers:	Julian Sharp Oliver Hardison	Outfielders:	Louis Forrest Clarence Hawley Harry B. Carver Harry E. Pardee

We frequently played against teams composed of such present-day substantial citizens as Charles Blackstock, Charles Perkins, F. L. Fairbanks, Myron Gabbert, Ed Duval, Ernest Franklin, Ben Copeland and others. It was my pleasure on September 1, 1934, to entertain the gentlemen above named and some others at a baseball party in Los Angeles.

I believe out of the Santa Paula Union High School there was developed the one baseball player from our village who reached Big League. That was Joseph Wilhoit, who was a sensational outfielder at one time for the St. Louis Cardinals.

So far, I have dealt with baseball as it developed around Santa Paula in particular, but just to wind up this article I give my readers what I believe to have been the all-time, all-star baseball team of Ventura County:

Pitchers:	Harvey Walbridge Dick Haydock J. Mungari I.P. Browne Julian Sharp Ernest Franklin Charles Hall	Infielders:	Paul Frost John Sebastian Wilmer Akers George Johnson Ony M. Nicely Will Fleisher Edmund Hearne
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Catchers: Carl Barkla  
Robert Elwell  
Henry Sparks  
Darby  
Ben C. Haugh  
Bert Johnson  
Fred Snodgrass

Outfielders: Robert Green  
John Fox  
Arthur Grainger  
Walter Johnson  
John Barnett  
Joe Wilhoit  
Clarence Hawley  
Harry Carver  
Ed Duval  
Ruel Lewis

All of our readers are familiar with the long baseball career of Charley Hall, grandson of R. O. Hall, an old-time settler east of Santa Paula, and likewise the phenomenal success of Fred C. Snodgrass, son of an early-day Ventura County Sheriff. John Barnett, son of Ventura city pioneers, became a great outfielder in the National League. These, together with Joe Wilhoit, were the only ones who played either in the American or the National League for any length of time. At different times George and Bert Johnson, Edmund Hearne, Ruel Lewis, Ernest Franklin and others, played in professional baseball. Our friend, Mondo Rivera, now of Rincon, was in his youth an excellent pitcher and later a splendid umpire.

## *Membership*

### LIFE

Philip Bard  
Mrs. Edith Hoffman  
Mrs. Grace Smith  
Mrs. Robert G. Haley  
Walter Wm. Hoffman  
John P. Thille  
Grace S. Thille  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard  
Mrs. E. C. Canet  
Henry M. Borchard  
Mrs. Rosemary H. Duncan  
Mrs. May H. Norcop  
Mrs. Harold Dudley

### SUSTAINING

Richard Bard  
Roger Edwards  
A. C. Hardison  
Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells

## *Half a Century of Service*

*Ventura County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.* Organized on April 4, 1898 with E. P. Foster, president; Nathan Blanchard, vice-president and Charles Barnard, secretary. This old Ventura County business firm has faithfully followed the high standards set by its pioneer founders.

*Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association.* Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

*County Stationers, Inc.*, 532 E. Main, Ventura. Successor to John J. MacGregor. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

*Bank of A. Levy*, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

### *Title Insurance and Trust Company*

*Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel*, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.



